



TENNIS WORLD

*A lot happen in a month*is

March
2014

ANA IVANOVIC

Rediscovering The Road To Greatness

PETE SAMPRAS

I don't miss the stress of the tour

HOW TO PREPARE THE MATCH

The state of flow and the self – overcoming

**The child who has moved
Rafael Nadal**

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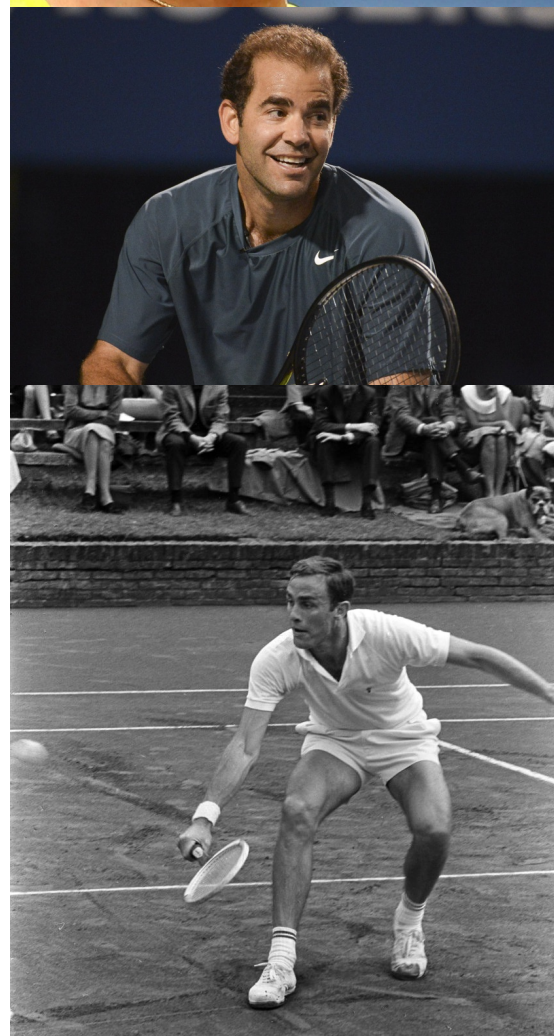
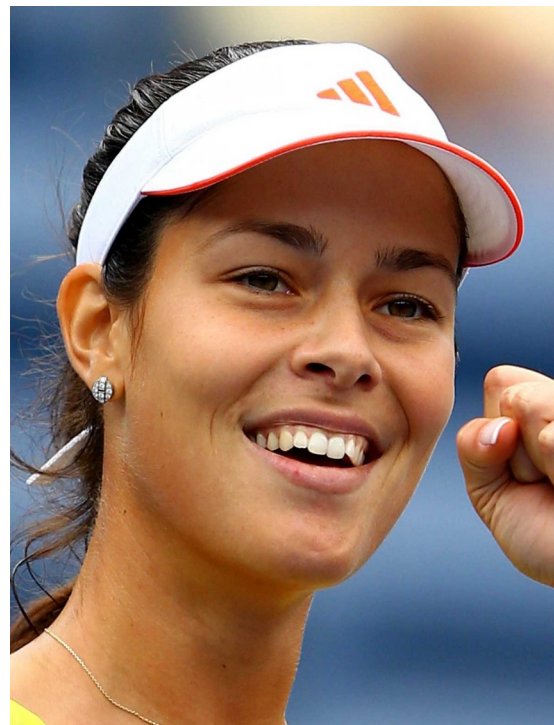
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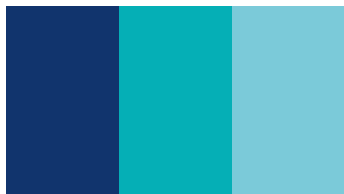
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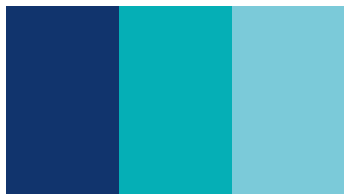


GO BEYOND



ANA IVANOVIC

by Dario Torromeo



"Only he who knows the destination knows the way."

"Only he who knows the destination knows the way."

This is the maxim that greets visitors to Ana Ivanovic's Twitter page. The Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu, the founder of Taoism, is the author of the statement.

It seems appropriate that Ana should turn to philosophy to help her better understand life and, ultimately, herself.

She has changed coaches so often and abandoned so many strategies that all that is left is to look inward.

I am no psychologist, but I've seen her play and interviewed her a few times. I do not know exactly what issues and insecurities are keeping her from

performing the way she did six years ago.

However, it seems to me that her continuous search for new guides and strategies has finally arrived at a decisive point.

Since the summer of 2013, things have been moving in the right direction for Ivanovic. Her team now consists solely of compatriots, like Nemanja Koutich, a good player and better coach, and Zlatko Novkovic, the black belt physiotherapist. "Ajde!" screamed Ana. She then lowered her visor and tightened her fist. "Come on!" replied Serena Williams.

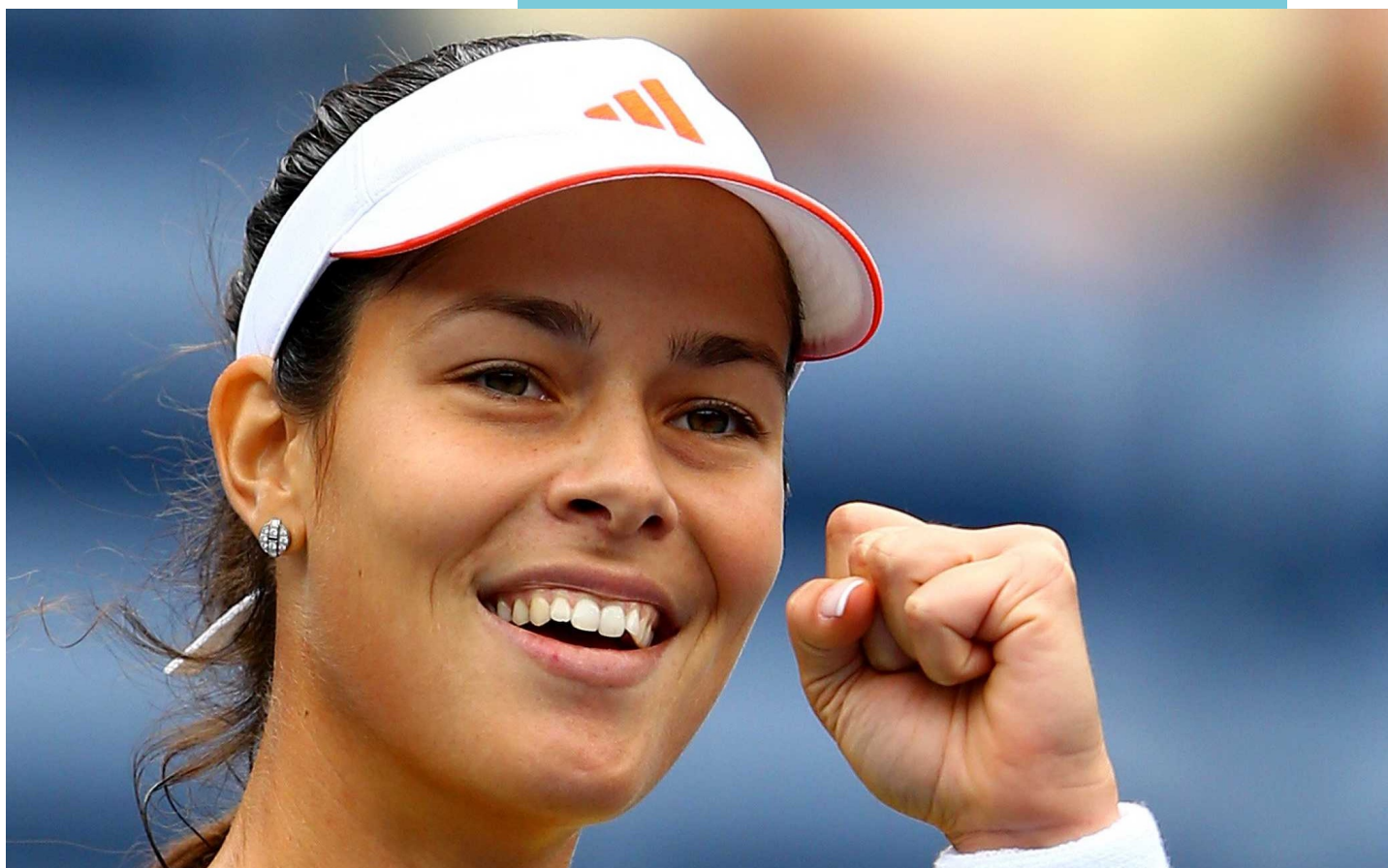
It is a short, a universal battle cry that everyone pronounces it their own



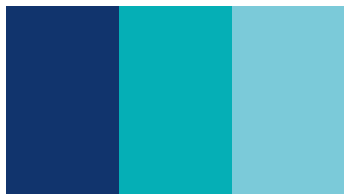
Her big break came thanks to a generous sponsor, Mr. Dan Halzmann of DH Management.

He put up \$400 000 for her journey to becoming a professional.

Some people say he never even saw her play before making the decision, but only ever saw a picture of her.



language Against Serena, Ana had never won. She had never even taken a set from the world number one. Yet she managed to easily dispatch of the American at the Australian Open this year, advancing to the quarter-finals of the year's first Slam. It was just a few weeks after she had beaten Venus – another first for her – in the final at Auckland. It might just be the start of a very special year for the Serbian. I admired her in 2008. I had applauded her in Paris, when she won Roland Garros and became the new world number one. She tenaciously stuck to the baseline, wearing down and often overwhelming her opponents.



Her story has always seemed a bit over the top, as if it couldn't be more perfectly crafted to make an emotional impact.

I compared her flat forehand to the devastating punch with which Thomas Hearns knocked out Roberto Duran. A gunshot that brooks no escape. A powerful serve, a good return and great tactical awareness...these are all things that Ana excelled in back in 2008.

They won her many fans, almost as many as her beauty. Watching from the stands, you cannot help but realize why so many lose their heads for her. Her long brown hair is usually in a ponytail, and her sensual face and beautiful eyes are easy to get lost in. She has often made me think of Anna Kournikova.

She excites the crowd like few others, and she has made more money off the court than on it. But then, the big difference is in the results. AK did not win a single one of the 127 tournaments in which she participated.

Ivanovic has won 12. Her story has always seemed a bit over the top, as if it couldn't be more perfectly crafted to make an emotional impact.

Her initiation to the sport came during Yugoslavia's bloody civil war, when she practiced in a swimming pool filled with dirt.

She trained every morning from 7 to 9, without ever skipping a single day.



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She trained every morning from 7 to 9, without ever skipping a single day.



Of course, there was the NATO bombing campaign, but as she pointed out in an interview: *"They took place at noon, I had time to play."* Monica Seles was her hero growing up, though she also admired Martina Navratilova. Her big break came thanks to a generous sponsor, Mr. Dan Halzmann of DH Management. He put up \$400 000 for her journey to becoming a professional. Some people say he never even saw her play before making the decision, but only ever saw a picture of her.

2008 was the year of magic. Then, inexplicably, things fell apart. On top of the world at age 21, she found herself down to number 65 in

the rankings two years later. She seemed to already be of an earlier time...a beautiful memory. Her game was clearly in crisis, with the serve in particular being unreliable. Her toss was a mess, following the right trajectory only a fraction of the time. It was perpetually too high or too low, too far left or too far right. Her groundstrokes also lost some power, and more than a little accuracy. Perhaps she had simply lost her way because she no longer knew the destination. Fortunately for her, family has been able to help her. She comes from a



middle class family.

Her mother was a lawyer, and one can immediately see where Ana got her looks and charms. Her father is a former basketball player who now works as a financial advisor for a telephone company.

They never put pressure on her, and she has never been lacking for support. When she decided to follow her tennis dreams, they stood right beside her every step of the way.

But just when she thought she had found the man she would spend the rest of her life with, Fernando Verdasco and Ana split up.

Many speculated that this also had an effect on her performance. Yet she has tried to put all of that behind her now. Ana started the season on fire, winning nine matches in a row. Her Australian run ended at the hands of Eugenie Bouchard, but her momentum is still strong.

Ivanovic seems like a new person. She appears to be at ease with herself, her game and her role as a celebrity. She also seems to be fully recommitted to tennis in every way.

She watches her diet carefully, and only drinks water.

The only thing she fears? Dogs, not opponents. Ana has realized that her life should be nice. After all, she earns a very good living from traveling around the world, playing a sport she loves and having her picture taken. She is ready to be happy.

"The Monk who Sold His Ferrari" is one of her favorite books now, and when she looks inwards, she likes what she sees.

She once again knows what the destination is.



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VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



Muguruza Blanco

To Be, Or Not To Be Spanish

The future of Spanish tennis was born in 1993 in Caracas, Venezuela. At least, that is what many of the sport's greatest minds believe. While people like Rafael Nadal, David Ferrer and Juan Carlos

She is not sure whether she wants to represent Spain or Venezuela

Ferrero have brought glory and prestige to men's tennis in Spain for over a decade, the women's side has not been as lively.

Carla Suarez Navarro is the only Spanish woman of note at the moment, and even she can barely stay in the Top 20. Garbiñe Muguruza Blanco, however, might just change all that.

But Spanish fans cannot celebrate quite yet. Apart from still needing to produce big results, there is another issue with Blanco...she is not sure whether she wants to represent Spain or Venezuela. The indecision is due to the fact that her own family is divided between the two countries: her father, who is Spanish, works in South America, while her mother, who is Venezuelan, now lives in Barcelona.

Having ended the 2013 season early due to a bad foot injury, Blanco flew to Hobart at the start of 2014, where she started from qualifying and eventually went on to win the title, to the surprise of everyone – including herself. She beat the Czech Klara Zakopalova 6-4, 6-0 in the final.

It was a great moment for her, as in addition to winning the title, she entered the Top 40 for the first time.

Winning begets winning, and Blanco went on to post an impressive performance at the Australian Open. There, she beat Kaia Kanepi, the Estonian who is always a tough opponent for everyone. Even more significant was her victory over Caroline Wozniacki in the third round – Blanco's first Top 10 win in a Grand Slam.

It was a tough victory, and she had to come back from a deficit a number of times, but she eventually managed to get home.

by Diego Barbiani

It was perhaps ironic that Radwanska should stop her in Melbourne, since it was the Pole who also defeated her in her first big tournament back in 2012.

Agnieszka Radwanska proved to be too much in the fourth round, but it hardly mattered. Blanco had made her mark. It was perhaps ironic that Radwanska should stop her in Melbourne, since it was the Pole who also defeated her in her first big tournament back in 2012. Back then, Blanco was just 17 years old, and had caused some serious waves by beating Vera Zvonareva (ranked 9) and Flavia Pennetta (25) in Miami, before losing in the quarter-finals.

2014 will be very important for Blanco. She has no points to defend from July to October (due to her injury last year), so there is a very real possibility that she can make a run to the Top 20 by the end of the season.

What makes Blanco most interesting to watch is that, unlike so many of her compatriots, she does not care for top spin and defense.

Her shots are hard and flat, and work very well on the faster courts where Spaniards traditionally struggle. Her game is similar to the Puerto Rican Monica Puig, another rising star, though Blanco is more capable of controlling her power than Puig is at the moment. Perhaps the most important thing Blanco has to work on is her tactics. Her inexperience can often be seen on the court, when she is outwitted by her opponents' strategies. But once she addresses that issue, there is no limit to what she will be able to do.



Her game is similar to the Puerto Rican Monica Puig, another rising star, though Blanco is more capable controlling her power than Puig is at the moment.

Perhaps the most important thing Blanco has to work on is her tactics. Her inexperience can often be seen on the court, when she is outwitted by her opponents' strategies.



She knows the road will be long and hard, especially considering the decision she has to make regarding her nationality.

"I'll end up making enemies," she says. "Someone will not like one or the other choice."

But that does not seem to bother her too much. Her focus now is squarely on her tennis, where it should be.

Coached by Alejo Mancisidor.

Began playing at age 3.

Aggressive style of play; favorite surface is hard; favorite shot is serve.

Speaks Spanish and English.

Enjoys cooking, reading, listening to music.

Favorite tennis players growing up were Serena Williams and Pete Sampras.



Taking A Riske

American tennis might be in a crisis as far as the men are concerned, but the women are experiencing something of a Renaissance. Of course, some promising stars have quickly faded away, such as

Alison Riske might be a late bloomer, but she is making up for lost time

Melanie Odin, who failed to build on a quarter-final showing at the US Open in 2007 at the age of 17.

But many others are showing consistent results at the highest levels, which might soon translate to Grand Slam success. In addition to Sloane Stephens, who is already blazing a trail to the Top 10, players like Jamie Hampton, Madison Keyes, Christina McHale, Lauren Davis and Alison Riske are all on the rise.

Renewed confidence

Of this group, Alison Riske is particularly interesting. Born in 1990, she reached the third round of the Australian Open this year, and recently broke into the Top 50 for the first time in her career.

Alison plays particularly well on grass. Curiously, her first 11 WTA wins came on the grass courts of Birmingham.

In 2010, she reached the semi-finals after coming through qualifiers and, and made it to the same stage again in 2013.

For most of her career, Riske has earned her points on the ITF circuit, with occasional ill-fated forays onto the WTA Tour.

However, after her run in Birmingham last year, things have changed. The American won her first match at a Grand Slam (reaching the third round at Wimbledon, the second round at the US Open and the third round in Australia) and her ranking has taken off. In some respects, she is the most promising player in America apart from Sloane Stephens.

by Giulio Nicoletti



The key to the breakthrough is mental, as is so often the case. Until the results of last summer, Alison did not feel like she belonged to the elite of world tennis.

This change of mind-set has come, in part, due to working with Yves Boulais, who she also worked with as a child. He helped her understand that even if she does not play well on a particular day, she can always play better the next day.

Now, with the help of other emerging young Americans, with who she has formed a close-knit group, she knows she can hold her own in any and every tournament.

An early start

Alison was born in Pittsburgh, and is the daughter of an FBI agent and a schoolteacher.

She started playing tennis at the age of three, and played through college, becoming the top ranked player in the category in 2008.

That year she accompanied the national Fed Cup team as a sparring partner to the semi-finals against Russia, which was her first taste of professionalism.

Her love for playing aggressively from the baseline caught the eye of Billie Jean King when she was just a teenager.



King also praised her tactical vision and ability to play each point with a purpose.

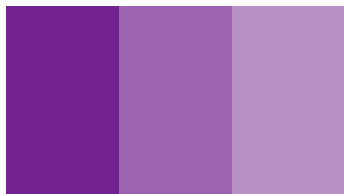
Allison came late to the Top 50, at age 23, but has arrived with the freshness of a young girl.

During her run to the second round of the US Open, she won the hearts of American fans by revealing that she still carries her baby blanket with her.

Great expectations

In Australia, she beat both Vesnina and Wickmayer with authority and in searing heat, before succumbing to Kerber in a tight match.

With few points to defend until July, it would not be surprising to find her in the Top 30 by the start of the clay season.



The Law of the iron wire



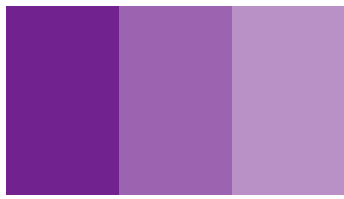
The new Tennis World Champions starts: **PS4's and many other prizes up for grabs.**

The new Tennis World Champions brings back the same feeling of the old Tennis

Manager, with players facing each other in a real scoreboard, with a ranking divided into master and general, with a season's ranking that recalls the ATP's concept.

The law of the iron wire.

Besides, depending on the tennis player's



The new Tennis World Champions starts: PS4's and many other prizes up for grabs.

“specialization”, it’s possible to develop a real schedule so that you can increase your surface’s training and improve those skills that allow you to value your playing style.

The game keeps its arcade’s imprint, not particularly managerial, as the challenges on the scoreboard don’t consist of a single match, but every tennis player will be able to challenge the opponent 10 times and the one that will have scored more points will go to the next round.

Unsrew the neck, tear off the head

Simultaneously to out player’s “technical” growth, there will also be the strategic one, as for each match it will be possible to set the best

strategies both in case you are the challenger and the challenged.

There has been an increase of importance for abilities such as: mood, experience and surface training!

These abilities increase or decrease according to the tennis player’s trend in the tournaments.

The shop hasn’t changed and it allows to buy equipment and to increase the skills. Everything is possible thanks to the credits that can’t be won through the tournaments anymore, but only through friendly matches in the Ranking Championship: every hour the points will be assigned based on the position!



Tennis World Champion evolves also in terms of **prizes**: not only one Master but 3 Masters in one calendar year. At the Master you can win many prizes among which Ps4’s, Wii’s, tennis racquets... Every tennis season is formed of 54 play rounds. Every round lasts 2 days. During these two days the players will face each other in order to proceed round after round and get to win the tournament.



RIGHT, LEFT; LEFT, RIGHT

In this new version every user will be able to choose which way to follow and the best player's strategy will cause the possibility to be the best player in Tennis World Champion.

At the end of the season there won't be a score's reset: the game will be perpetual.

Once a season is ended, the points scored during the previous season's rounds will have to be confirmed or improved in the following one... otherwise you will relentlessly lose positions and so you won't be able to reach a good position in the tournaments (among the first 8 seeds!).

At the end of every season there will be a master. The first 64 best players of the final master's specific Ranking will take part in it. This Ranking is based exclusively on the points scored in the top Level tournaments



A Bright Future

by Alessandro Varassi

Though Eugenie Bouchard has enjoyed great success on the court, she might very well have an even brighter future off the court. Is she the new Maria Sharapova?

The new face of women's tennis. That is the gift that the 2014 Australian Open gave the world. Li Na might have taken the title, but it was Eugenie Bouchard, the 19 year-old Canadian, who stole the show. She now finds herself in the Top 20, an incredible achievement considering that this time last year she wasn't even in the Top 130. Though her tennis achievements have been great of late, it is for another reason that advertisers and tournament organizers are excited about Bouchard: her looks. Many have already pegged her as the true heir to Maria Sharapova.

Indeed, Sam Duvall, Bouchard's agent, is already playing up these hopes, and is looking to translate his client's personality, playfulness and beauty into the kind of long-term commercial success that Sharapova is still enjoying.

Among her fans, Eugenie can count Stacey Allaster, the CEO of the WTA. Allaster is no fool, and knows how popular someone like Bouchard can make the women's Tour. The BBC has already pointed out that many companies feel the same, and say that she is *"an incredible talent, and a good ambassador for any company that wants to offer her a contract."*



The Canadian's star is rising at an incredible rate, with her Facebook page getting more than 100 000 new likes during the Australian Open alone.

She also got 107 thousand followers on Twitter.



Of course, Maria Sharapova knows the power of a beautiful spokesperson better than anyone, and reportedly asked Nike to have Bouchard wear Sharapova's clothing line on court. Both players are under contract with Nike.

But which sectors would be interested in a partnership with Eugenie? Surely the world of fashion and entertainment would be at the top of the list, but car companies, financial institutions and countless other businesses would love to have this young face, so graceful and confidence-inspiring, to promote their products. There is currently a void at the top of the WTA, with no young player really making it big enough to become a superstar. Bouchard seems more than happy to fill that void.



“I miss the moment,
I miss the last weekend of a major.
I miss the excitement.
I don't miss the stress.
I don't miss the pressure, the expectations
I put on myself.
I miss the game, but
I don't miss the stress of it.
It's a tough sport.
I feel like I walked away at the right time”



Pete Sampras

'I don't miss the stress of the tour'

It's 12 years since Pete Sampras hung his racket up for good, assured of his place as one of the greatest in history, and he says he hasn't once been tempted to return.

At times, rumours have circulated that Sampras was planning one last hurrah on the lush lawns of SW19 and although he admits he occasionally misses the unique adrenaline rush that comes with the business end of a major, he couldn't imagine dealing with all the pressure that goes with being a top level athlete, anymore.

"I miss the moment," he said. "I miss the last weekend of a major. I miss the excitement. I don't miss the stress. I don't miss the pressure, the expectations I put on myself. I miss the game, but I don't miss the stress of it. It's a tough sport. I feel like I walked away at the right time."

Sampras' old rival Pat Rafter made a surprise comeback of sorts at January's Australian Open, teaming up with Lleyton Hewitt in the men's doubles.

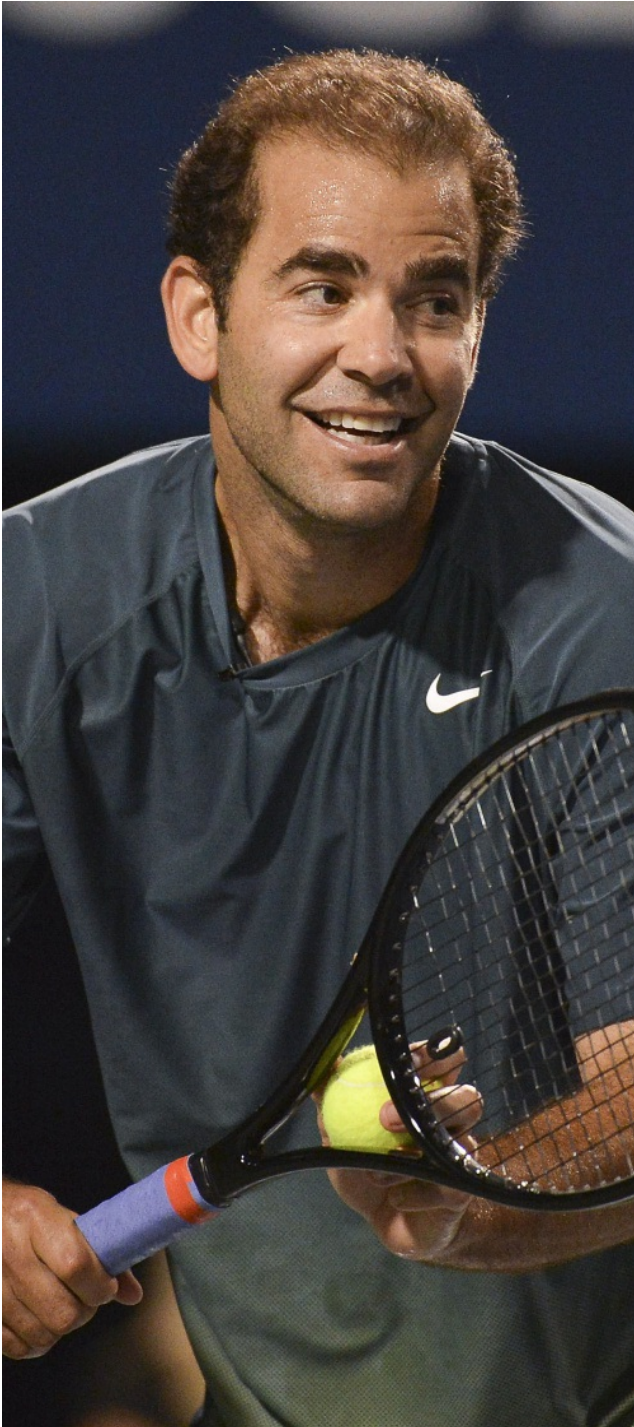
Sampras gave a wry smile as he quickly dispelled any hopes that he might follow suit at Flushing Meadows, preferring to compete solely in the hit and giggle environment of the exhibition circuit these days.

He pops up every so often at the majors these days as a VIP or analyst but with two young children, he's keen to avoid anything which requires regular touring commitments, which is why we won't be seeing him join the growing number of A-list coaches on the circuit right now.

"It's not for me," he said. "I've been asked by a couple guys. But the travel, to go on the road, do all that they're doing is not something that I'm interested in."

Sampras remains an intrigued spectator of the game and he was delighted to see Stanislas Wawrinka pick up his first major at this year's Australian Open, predicting that the Swiss is even capable of going on to win a couple more.

by David Cox



The single-handed backhand is making a bit of a resurgence these days with Wawrinka, Roger Federer, Richard Gasquet and Grigor Dimitrov among those flying the flag at the highest level.

Sampras believes that his own game could still have made an impact in the current era, believing that 21st century racket technology would actually have aided serve-volley.

“Yeah, why wouldn't I serve-volley against these guys?” he smiled. “Serve and volley on both serves. That's the only way I know how to play. People say it's harder to do it, the technology. But I think technology would have helped me out. If I used these racquets that Rafa is using, it's easier to serve, easier to volley. I could serve harder, longer. It would have been easier. So it all evens out.”

“But I think serve-and-volley tennis, it would have been just fine today. I just think you need to know how to do it. You have to start about 13 years old. You can't start at 18 or 19. I started at 13. That's when I changed to the one-handed backhand. It takes a feel. It just takes a certain intuition out there that you have to figure out. It doesn't happen overnight.”

Sampras was at his pomp during the era of big servers with the relentless bullets from the likes of Goran Ivanisevic, Greg Rusedski, Rafter and Richard Krajicek leading some to complain that the sport was becoming a little tedious and one-dimensional.



However Sampras feels that things have gone a little too much the other way over the past decade, with everything ending up as one big slugfest.

“The serve-and-volley tennis is a lost art,” he said. “No one is really doing it. Everyone is staying back and hitting the crap out of the ball, which is fun to watch. You look at Wimbledon these days. It is one-dimensional.

It’s just the nature of technology, maybe the nature of how everyone is growing up with technology.

They’re used to not having to volley, serve and volley.

It takes time.

It doesn’t happen overnight.”

“Seeing Stefan, he was a great serve and volleyer.

Boris, Goran Ivanisevic.

Now everyone plays the same way, there’s just four or five guys that are a lot better than the rest.

Roger has a little more variety, to come in, you know, slice it, chip-and-charge occasionally, show a little bit of that.

For the most part it’s just everyone staying back and throwing rocks.”

Sampras debuted on the professional tour in 1988 and played his last top-level tournament in 2002, when he won the US Open, defeating rival Andre Agassi in the final.

He was the year-end world no. 1 for six consecutive years (1993–1998), a record for the Open Era.

His seven Wimbledon singles championships is an Open Era record shared with Roger Federer, while Sampras’ five US Open singles titles is an Open Era record shared with both Federer and Jimmy Connors.



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One self-catering unit is also available.



Our adventure started and we hope that can be part you too! We are waiting to welcome you and to try to get you what we have lived us during our stay in South Africa!



Pete Sampras

The lord of the grass courts

In the breakthrough period of 90's and far then American tennis has its boom time because of great tennis players like Pete Sampras - the mastering champion of Wimbledon, Andre Agassi – with his one of the best return in the history, Jim Courier –

He started swinging racquet at the age of 3 and... achieved the 14-time Grand Slam championship.

great clay court player, Michael Chang – the youngest Grand Slam champion and Todd Martin – the one of the tallest competitor on the court and big server.

All of this players lifted the level of the game for spectacular.

The first one born in Washington and growing up in California started swinging racquet at the age of 3 and... achieved the 14-time Grand Slam championship.

One of the best of Wimbledon and US Open player ever. His worst tournament of majors was French Open but the lack of winnings in this case was fulfilled by Courier, Chang and Agassi.

Sampras with his Greek roots made with one year older Agassi one of the most fascinating rivalries in the history of tennis in general – having overall 34 of clashes, 20 wins for Sampras and 14 for Agassi.

Started professional career in 1988 when he was sixteen! The first match versus Agassi in 1989 he lost earning only three games but in his first important US Open and last performance in New York he beaten in finals the man from Las Vegas. In 1993 became the ranking leader for the first time. On the #1 spot he remained for 286 weeks and it was the record till Federer (302 weeks).

“Pistol Pete” for many considering as the one of the greatest in the history for others as one of the most boring players. Why? The American always wanted to prove his value on the court and then off-court he used to be calm person with no eccentric and extravagant actions or behaviors.

by Jan Stanski



In the comparison to Agassi which was one of the most “colourful” player ever that could be understandable for that reason.

And maybe that contrast was more attractive for the sponsors and marketing issues and the whole rivalry of both ‘Nike’ sportsmen which made lots of commercials in that matter.

With his extraordinary talent Pete rewrote history books by holding the #1 ranking for six consecutive years. The worst season was year 2001 with no Grand Slam titles.

Engaged and married in year 2000 with actress Bridgette Wilson.

“Marrying Bridgette was the best thing that ever happened to me. Now I have good balance and stability in my life” – was saying Sampras back in the days.

In the year 2007 name of Pete Sampras was written on the list of International Tennis Hall of Fame. Coached in professional tennis adventure by Tim Gullikson and Paul Annacone.

Having very various style of game with “serve and volley” plus extremely dangerous forehand from the baseline which was effective on fast surfaces.

For many tennis fans and experts his matches against Agassi, Courier, Boris Becker, Goran Ivanisevic or Pat Rafter were the most exciting in the history.

We can only regret that Pete was playing earlier at the time without Federer (they played only once), Nadal or Djokovic. He dominated the game at his peak.



In his book "Champion's Mind" he says: *"But if you want to be the best at something, then something needs to become a sense of your life. You can not have everything. It is impossible to lead a rich social life, reconcile scientific ambitions with sport and still focus on all of them. To become good at tennis, you need a lot of time and work, and the most important are the youngest years".*

Sampras was born in Potomac, Maryland, the third child of Sammy and Georgia Sampras. His mother emigrated from Sparta, Greece, and his father was born in the United States to a Greek father and a Jewish mother.[2][3] He attended regular services of the Greek Orthodox Church on Sundays



Lukasz Kubot

The last of the Mohicans

Began playing at age nine...Father, Janusz, is a soccer coach; mother, Dorota... Has a younger sister, Paulina, who is studying physiotherapy... Strengths of game are serve, return and forehand and favourite surfaces are clay and slow hard courts... His best junior Grand Slam result was QF at Wimbledon in singles and doubles in 2000... Players he admired growing up were Yevgeny Kafelnikov, Stefan Edberg and Jonas Bjorkman... In July 2013, he was awarded the Gold Cross of Merit by Polish President Bronislaw Komorowski... Fitness trainer is Ivan Machytka.

T

ill the great performance of Jerzy Janowicz in Paris Bercy Lukasz Kubot was the long time polish number one tennis player in the world. He is well known for his afterall dance

called "cancan" or serve&volley strategy. Thats why he is the one and only because his game even not so effective is very liked by older fans of tennis especially Wimbledon fans - the ones remembering Stefan Edberg or Patrick Rafter "trips" to the net. Beautiful style. Good old game. But not always effective as attractive.

The man from Boleslawiec (Lukas was born there) although he was growing up in Lubin is very appreciated doubles player. He was the one to get text message from experienced Swede - Robert Lindstedt to play together in this year's Aussie Open at Melbourne Park.

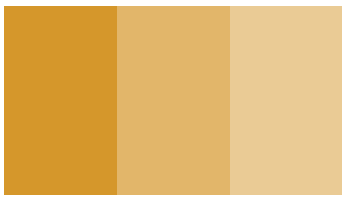
The debut of never playing before polish-swedish duo was tremendous. They won six matches and triumphed in Grand Slam for the first time in careers of both players.

Even Lindstedt had before three finals the fortune comes to him with Lukas Kubot. "Luki" - because its Lukas nickname - admitted that he prolonged his time on the court after unexpected quarterfinal at Wimbledon last year when he lost in polish match against Jerzy Janowicz.

The dream came true for him that day even he lost. He was dreaming to join to the elite club of quarterfinalist in All England Club in London and he did it.

After the tournament both Poles in July 2013 were awarded the Gold Cross of Merit by Polish President Bronislaw Komorowski..

Because father of Lukas was working as football coach over the years the Pole had like few of tennis players great dilemma what sport to choose for better.



The polish former number one is coaching by Czech team
- Jan Stoces and Ivan Machitka (fitness).

“When I was 16-17 years old I had to decide what I want to do with my life. I chose tennis and as you can see and it was a good choice. But to this day, I still like to kick the ball”

The polish former number one is coaching by Czech team - Jan Stoces and Ivan Machitka (fitness). The mentioned earlier exceptional dance "cancan" is an effect of the bet with one of them to prove by Lukas that he is able to do it after great performance on the court. *“Where did you get this way of showing joy?”* – asked journalist. *“From the beginning of my career I had much of importance to put on my physical preparation. I am a tall player, so I have to stretch a bit more than the average player.*

Swinging of legs was one of the exercises that my coach Ivan Machitka advised to me”- Lukas replied.

“Today it is like my card”.

“The first cancan was in 2011, just in Australia. I had beaten the eighteenth ranked tennis player Sam Querrey then. It was fiveset thriller, so I expressed a tremendous joy that day” – he added.

His adventure with tennis was not as well as the way of professional should be so he needed to start practicing abroad for having chance to boom his career - in Austria and then in Prague where he met his coaches and started rebuild his idea about tennis.



"I dream of tennis academy where young people could combine sport with the school. Even if the kids wouldn't achieve success in sport, it is a great capital. Pulling them from the problems of drugs, alcohol. The Czechs, who have several times smaller country, laugh at us, that we have no real infrastructure for tennis. There are living about 10 million people, and regularly have their tennis players best ranked and best in the world. And it highly."

On the press conferences and during interviews is very nice person always trying to answer well for the questions. A few know that as a young kid Lukas had to get up early in the morning to wait for the bus which took him to the tennis courts.

It was not easy the circumstances because in the area where Lukas were practicing was not the good tennis center to improve his skills. After many years later the situation has changed.

Nowadays Kubot is original player. As he admitted he can play in doubles couple of years more and he does not resign from singles in spite of much worse results.

Taking into consideration the careers of fantastic players like Roger Federer or Rafael Nadal Kubot's way could be estimated as grotesque but especially for the compatriot observers - which appreciate hard work, the passion for the game and his style - Lukas gained also the historic thing - not only the Grand Slam title in doubles and quarterfinal of Wimbledon but - he is the first polish player to win the title in Australia since Wojciech Fibak did it in 1978 with Australian Kim Warwick. *"For such moments I live and train hard"* – admitted Kubot

The 31-year old right-handed "Polish Bull" said that his favourite surface is clay or slow hard court although seems that good results he had also on the grass courts (his best junior Grand Slam result was QF at Wimbledon in singles and doubles in 2000)

Growing up Lukas admired such great competitors like Yevgeny Kafelnikov, Stefan Edberg and Jonas Bjorkman. Apart title in Melbourne Park he won eight titles in doubles competition and achieved seven finals. Also two finals in singles.

The Pole during the off-season time is competing in Czech and German tennis league. He plays for TK Neride and Rot-Weiss Erfurt.



Bogomolov Jr.

A Rollercoaster Career

It is not easy to summarize the career of Alex Bogomolov Jr. The Russian is immensely talented, and has enjoyed significant success in his time, but he still struggles to produce the kind of consistency that would keep him in the Top 50.

At 30 years of age, Alex Bogomolov Jr. is definitely a veteran of the ATP Tour. But his career has hardly been a simple one, as he has experienced periods of extreme ups and devastating downs. However, with so many older players still posting good results, he is hoping that the final stretch will be his best one.

Each and every match is almost a microcosm of his time as a professional tennis player: a good amount of risk, with moments of magic contrasted by periods of sheer lunacy.

Bogomolov was born in Moscow in 1983, and his career began as early as 1999, when he played in his first Futures tournaments.

His first Grand Slam appearance came at the US Open in 2001, where he lost to David Nalbandian. He officially turned pro in 2001, and won three tournaments on the Challenger and Futures circuits. However, the biggest result of his young career came at the ATP event in Los Angeles, when he beat then world number 3 Tommy Haas in straight sets. Though he lost in the next round to Nicolas Pietrangeli, the experience gave him a great deal of confidence. It also showed that he could beat the best players in the world, but usually not with much consistency.

In 2003, Bogomolov stagnated a bit, winning only three Challengers in Leon, Forest Hills and Tiburon. In Bangkok, he managed to snatch a set off world number one Juan Carlos Ferrero in the second round, but ultimately lost in three. From 2004 to 2010, Bogomolov failed to make any major strides with his game. Though he still regularly won at Challenger level, that success rarely translated onto the main Tour. He only won his first Grand Slam match in 2006, when he beat Fernando Gonzalez in five sets.

2011 was the best in Bogomolov's career so far. After failing to qualify for the Australian Open, he had some success on the Challenger circuit before reaching the quarter finals in the ATP 250 event in Zagreb. The month of March was the best one Bogomolov ever had.

by Marco Di Nardo

Knowing his past, it would not surprise us if he had his best year in 2014, but it might also just be his worst.

He won a Challenger in Dallas, then qualified for the main draw of the ATP 1000 tournament in Indian Wells Masters, before performing the same feat in Miami. He beat world number 5 Andy Murray in the main draw before eventually falling to John Isner. On clay, he reached two Challenger finals in Sarasota and Prague, losing to Blake and Rosol respectively. Bogomolov also played well on grass, reaching the quarter-finals of the ATP 250 tournaments in 's-Hertogenbosch and Newport, as well as the third round at Wimbledon, his best career result in a Grand Slam. In the summer swing in the US, he reached his first ATP 250 semi-final in

Los Angeles, then the second round at the Masters 1000 events in Montreal and Cincinnati.

He beat world number 10 Jo-Wilfried Tsonga in the latter tournament. At the US Open, he reached the third round, after which he made it to the quarter-finals of the ATP 250 event in Moscow and the semi-final in St. Petersburg. At that point, he reached a career-high ranking of 33 in the world.

In 2012, as might be expected, Bogomolov could not reproduce the magic of the previous year. After reaching the second round at the Australian Open, he suffered a series of defeats that saw him drop out of the Top 100 by year-end.



The USTA is trying to recoup the money it spent on Alex Bogomolov, who recently switched to play under the Russian flag.

"The American side did in fact issue us with an invoice for \$75,000," Alexei Selivanenko, vice president of the Russian Tennis Federation, said. "This is the amount that was spent by their federations on Bogomolov all these years."



In 2013, he had to start almost from scratch, but returned to the Top 100 thanks to good results on the Challenger circuit. His best tournament was the Masters 1000 in Montreal, where he qualified for the main draw after coming through qualifiers. He went on to beat Michael Llodra and David Ferrer before losing to Davydenko. He also reached the second round of the US Open. So far, Bogomolov Jr. has gotten off to a slow start in 2014. He failed to qualify in both Doha and Sydney, and didn't win a match at the Australian Open. However, at the ATP 250 in Memphis, he showed some fight, defeating Sam Querrey and Ryan Harrison to make it to the quarter-finals. He lost to defending champion there, but did manage to take a set.

Bogomolov Jr. is currently ranked 88 in the world, and continues to alternate between positive and negative results.

His aim is to return to the Top 50 this year with some good results on the American hard courts, where he usually plays his best tennis.

Knowing his past, it would not surprise us if he had his best year in 2014, but it might also just be his worst.

You can never tell with Alex.



New Season, New Champions

The beginning of the new tennis season has already crowned some unlikely new champions, with Stan The Man and Fabio Fognini leading the pack.

Fabio Fognini had high hopes as a junior, often

playing on par with future superstars like Novak Djokovic and Andy Murray. But at the age when most players make their biggest strides, at around 18-20, Fognini stagnated. After years of crazy on-court outbursts, no doubt manifestations of his frustration, the Italian had earned a reputation as an underachieving drama queen.

Yet recently, he seems to have calmed down a bit, and his results have improved as a direct result. He now often exhibits the calmness of a confident veteran, much of which can be ascribed to his coach, Jose Perlas. Perlas had another hothead, Nicolas Pietrangeli, as a previous student, and seems to have applied the lessons he learned there on Fognini.

As well as mental strides, Fognini has made some technical ones as well. His second serve has much more bite to it, and he has become more patient in constructing points. Of course, Fognini has had memorable moments in his career before, such as reaching the quarter-finals at Roland Garros, and his incredible win over Monfils there in near-complete darkness.

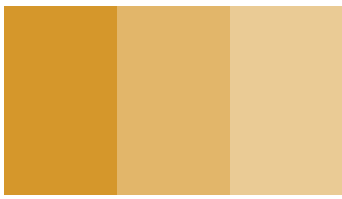
But now he achieves such moments of magic with much greater consistency. One need only re-watch his second round match against Sam Querrey at the Australian Open this year as proof of the changes he has undergone. His title win in Vina del Mar was also mighty impressive, along with his solid Davis Cup performances. It seems that, for the first time in his career, Fognini might live up to the Top 10 potential he once showed as a youngster.

Swiss sensation

Another late bloomer also grabbed headlines early in the season. For the first time in its history, Switzerland has two players in the Top 10, and surprisingly, Roger Federer is not the higher ranked of the two. Instead, Stanislas Wawrinka, who for years labored in the long shadow of his friend and compatriot, is the best tennis player in Switzerland.

It didn't come easily, however. In order to achieve this milestone he had to win the Australian Open and make the highest ranking jump of any player in the Top 10 in more than a decade (the last player to climb more than 5 positions in the Top Ten was Agassi in 2002).

by Adriano S



It was nothing personal, of course. Roger cheered happily, enjoying the defeats of Nadal and Djokovic. He also decided to join Stan in the Davis Cup this year, hinting that he would make his first ever serious attempt to capture the cup. Were the frustrations of a life spent in the background behind this late blooming of Stan The Man? Perhaps. But then again, he has always flirted with being a top tier player. A few years ago he reached the final in Rome and broke into the Top 10. He lost his way for a while after that, but in 2013 reached his first Grand Slam semi-final. Of course, his efforts culminated in his lifting the trophy in Melbourne, becoming the fifth oldest man to win his first Slam.

The fact that he did so by defeating Djokovic and Nadal back-to-back makes it even more extraordinary. That's an achievement that even his great friend can be envious of. His new coach, Magnus Norman, who led Robin Soderling on a similar journey from promising-but-flawed player to genuine superstar, also got his first Grand Slam. He has had much to do with Stan's improvement. The Swiss champion's serve is stronger and his groundstrokes are harder, but most of all he is mentally tougher than he's ever been. The Swiss champion's serve is stronger and his groundstrokes are harder, but most of all he is mentally tougher than he's ever been. We hope he can sustain this run for the rest of the year. After all, the more the merrier.



Wawrinka stopped attending regular schooling at age 15 to focus full-time on tennis. However, he continued his schooling by distance education with the French organization CNED, which offered him greater flexibility. Wawrinka considers clay his best surface and his serve and volley his best shot. He won a gold medal for Switzerland in the men's doubles event at the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, partnering Roger Federer, by beating Swedish team Simon Aspelin and Thomas Johansson in the final. They were also honoured with the 2008 Swiss Team of the Year Award. John McEnroe believes that Wawrinka has one of the most powerful backhands he has ever seen and describes him as having *"the best one-handed backhand in the game today"*



The Bosnian Breaker

«In Sarajevo there is only one hard court, and so far I have
been training on surfaces
that do not exist on the ATP Tour.»

Born in Sarajevo in 1992, during the war, Damir Dzumhur lives in Rome. At the age of 21 he has a number of firsts under his belt already, such as being the first Bosnian to both make it to the main draw of a Grand Slam and win a match. And given his recent successes, he seems destined to become the first Bosnian man to reach the Top 100. Today he trains in Rome because *"in Sarajevo there is only one hard court, and so far I have been training on surfaces that do not exist on the ATP Tour."*

In Rome, he trains with his father, Nerfid, and Alberto Castellani, a former coach of Marc Rosset and Ivo Karlovic. Castellani has been of huge help to him, especially in terms of improving his mental game.

"Now I'm at a level where I cannot stay in Bosnia, and Italy is a logical choice," he said recently.

His first contact with tennis came early, thanks to a stroke of good luck.

"I was lucky because my father is a coach and worked at a club," he recalls. *"I started with him, going to the courts since I was three years old. I love this sport and I play with all my heart. At first my parents helped me financially, but over the past two years I have found a couple of sponsors. There is not much money but enough to cover some expenses. But I do not think about the money. I just try to play better. Now with the third round in a Grand Slam, I can pay for the rest of the season."*

Damir is very honest and open in interviews, and the passion he has for tennis shines through both on and off the court. It is, perhaps, because it has taken him so long to get here.

After a decent junior career (he was ranked as high as number three), he only recently started performing well at a professional level. Last year, he reached his first Challenger finals, in Poznan and Kosice. At the end of 2013 in Bratislava, he also beat his first upper tier opponent in Jiri Vesely.

by Daniele Malafarina



In Melbourne, he started from qualifiers, where he beat Dustin Brown (the top seed) in the first round. "I had good preparation. They told me that I had nothing to lose, he had played the quarter-finals in Doha, but somehow I thought I could play well."

His Australian dream was finally stopped by Berdych. It was his first match against a Top Ten player on a major stage. After the match, Djokovic also stopped to congratulate him: *"He told me that I will have success in the future. Novak is one of the best ever and the fact that he said that is very important to me. I had already met him when I was 16, but I do not remember him. He also told me that if I continue to play at this level, even in the Challengers, I will soon be in major tournaments. I came home with a memory that I will always carry inside. Bosnia did not sleep for a whole night. Everyone watched the match against Berdych."*

As a child he loved Pat Rafter, for his play and his elegance. In recent years, however, Federer has become his hero. "I do not think there is anyone who does not like how he plays. But the Top 10 are all exceptional players and great people. They greet me. I am 180 and they stop to say hello."

As a child he loved Pat Rafter, for his play and his elegance.
In recent years, however, Federer has become his hero.

After beating Ivo Karlovic in the first round, he got a free pass into the third round when Ivan Dodig retired from their match due to cramping. "It takes a little luck," he said happily afterwards. Then, speaking of the large Bosnian community in Melbourne, he said: "They were like another player next to me and helped me a lot. But Ivan is a friend, a fighter and has helped me in the past."

When he started the season, he did not know where to play. Being 188 in the world is not enough to get into most Challengers, but he did not want to play Futures events.

"I chose two minor Challengers, but didn't go. So I did not know what to do. Now everything is different. Now I have to choose carefully because I have a chance to get into the Top 100."



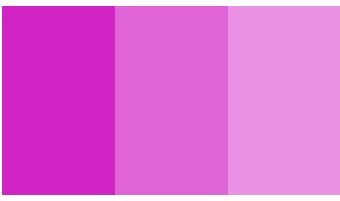
His goal for the season, which was to reach the Top 150, has already been reached. After his trip to Australia, he was 144 in the world.

Damir is very proud of his passport and to represent Bosnia. His result in Australia is comparable to the qualification of the Bosnian national team for the soccer World Cup in Brazil. "Bosnia is a small country, but it deserves to be known, and I hope that my example may encourage more children to watch or play tennis."

Damir is also part of Bosnia's Davis Cup team. *"Last year against Moldova in Mostar I played three matches in two days, for twelve hours straight. They took me to the hospital at the end, and we lost, but it does not matter."*

Now I hope that my needed results bring some people to see the next round. Tennis is not very popular in Bosnia, but I love the Davis Cup."

As a kid Džumhur was practicing skiing and football to addition to tennis. He admired Patrick Rafter and Roger Federer the most, and also he is a keen football fan and he supports Bosnian team FK Željezničar. In his childhood he acted in two movies – Grbavica (2006), as background actor and Mörderischer Frieden (2007), where he played major role as Durcan. He speaks Bosnian and English and studies political science at the Faculty of Political Science in Sarajevo, at the University of Sarajevo



Never Say Never

by Fulvio Consoli

Connor Stroud's incredible journey to becoming a tennis player and an inspiration.

Conner Stroud is a 12 year-old boy who plays tennis. The one thing that sets him apart from all the other boys his age playing the sport is that he has no legs.

He realized a long-standing dream at the US Open recently, when he got to meet Rafael Nadal, who was impressed by his example and strength of will.

"It means a lot to me to play," Conner said at the time, "because I realize that many people see me and are inspired by me. Everyone who has seen my videos say that they are happy to see me play. I just try to enjoy myself as much as possible."

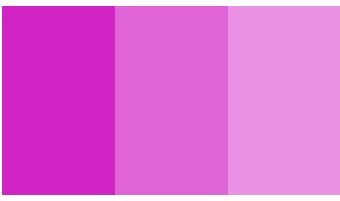
"The story of Conner touches all of us, and everyone he meets," his mother added. "The disability has made him more determined. Other children let themselves break down, instead he is the opposite. His extraordinary personality helps him and I think that's what inspires people."

The young American was born with a serious genetic defect. Conner has almost no legs, and the upper part of his body is basically attached directly to his feet.

Despite this severe disability, the youngster has succeeded in developing a technique that allowed him to play tennis, one of his great passions.



Helped by his father, who wanted to give his son as normal of a life as possible, Conner learned to hit with a western grip, which has proven to be very effective, despite the fact that he has to hit the ball so low.



Thanks to his talent and a lot of training, he has become quite the player, and has even participated in some junior events. He recently got his first win in a doubles match.

Conner's determination shows that with passion and a positive attitude, anything is possible. Nadal certainly did not hide his admiration for the young man.

"Conner proves that you can be happy no matter what, even if Mother Nature has not given you everything. He is a great example for me, and I am sure for many other people."

Meanwhile, Conner has received countless messages of congratulations and admiration on Twitter.

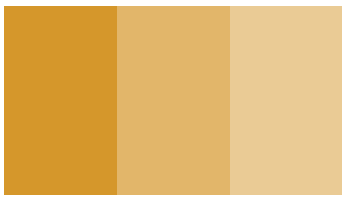
Conner will soon play in his first wheelchair tournament.

"I love tennis because it is a sport that puts you alone against your opponent," he said of his passion for the game. "You need to get the best out of yourself in every situation if you want to win the match."

Nadal concurred with his sentiment.

"It's amazing the way it manages to cope with life and combat problems," the world number one said. *"He enjoys, plays tennis and is part of the sports world."*

Conner has even beaten some able-bodied children. *"I wouldn't be surprised if one day he plays in the US Open wheelchair event,"* his proud mother concluded.



Goran Ivanisevic

The Dream That Wouldn't Die

He turned professional in 1988 and later that year, with Rudiger Haas, won his first career doubles title in Frankfurt, but he focused more on his singles career, yet had some success in doubles, winning nine titles and reaching a career high ranking of 20.

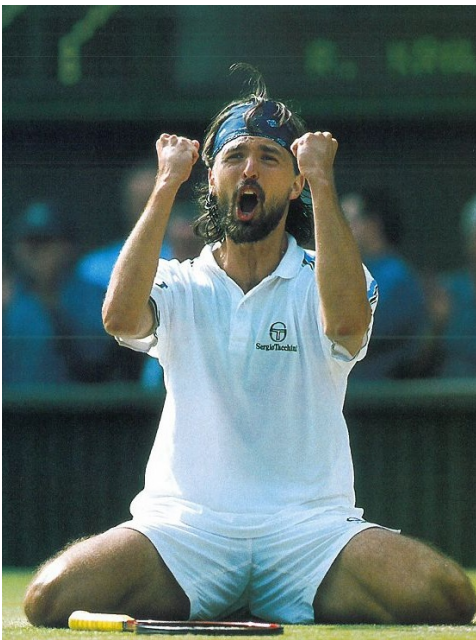
He is the only person to win the men's singles title at Wimbledon as a wildcard. He achieved this in 2001, having previously been runner-up at the championships in 1992, 1994 and 1998. His career-high singles ranking was World No. 2 (behind Pete Sampras) in 1994.

Tennis will remember him for many things. His 1477 aces in 1996, for example, and his 22 tournaments wins. And let's not forget about that incredible Grand Slam victory.

But above all, tennis remembers Goran Ivanisevic as one of the most extraordinary characters the sport has ever seen.

His exuberant personality was something to behold. In a press conference, no one could beat him, and I will never forget his reaction after triumphing on Wimbledon's Center Court in 2001. When Goran Ivanisevic retired from tennis, the sport did not just lose a great player, it lost a fascinating actor. But that Wimbledon...it defined his career. It was the ultimate fairytale story. He was the warrior prince who, tired of relying only on memories, decided to start living in the present. The journey had started nine years earlier, when he first lost to Andre Agassi in the Wimbledon final, and it ended with him lifting the trophy to the sky, and saying to himself, "This is for you, Drazen."

Drazen Petrovic was a basketball player who died in 1993 in an automobile accident. Goran was a like a boy again. "*I do not want someone to come to wake me up to tell me, 'hey, you've lost again,'*" he said tearfully afterwards. Patrick Rafter smiled, happy with his status as runner up at that particular moment. Tears had accompanied the entire match, with even Croatian fans crying in the stands. It was played on a Monday because of persistent rain over the weekend. The stadium was completely covered with flags, mostly Australian, but quite a few Croatian ones as well. Sdrjan Ivanisevic, his father, had made the trip.



Goran was crying as he served for the match. The last game was a thriller full of surprises. At 15-30, the Croatian served two aces and earned a Championship point.

Then, he double faulted. Another match point, another double fault. Twice he had been one point from victory and had failed.

Dad lowered his head.

He feared a similar conclusion to that of the other three finals (all lost) in which he had also come close, but ultimately failed.

Ivanisevic kissed the ball and spoke to it – begged it – to let him win just this one point.

There was an intense silence. The crowd held its collective breath, as some Australians quietly waved their flags.



The Croats prayed, and dad Sdrijan lowered his eyebrows, clutching his nose. He seemed to want to disappear, as if a single sigh could ruin the spell. Finally, the serve came, and Rafter made an error. Game over. Goran Ivanisevic should not even have been in the tournament. His ranking, at 125, was not high enough to guarantee a spot. So, the All England Club, out of a sense of nostalgia, granted him a wild card. He rewarded their confidence by becoming the lowest ranked winner in the event's history. He had not even been playing well coming into the tournament. He left should have been giving him lots of trouble, and he was struggling to post good results. At the time, it seemed as if he would have to start playing qualifiers or Challengers to get his ranking back up. Then came Wimbledon, and after 213 aces, and victories over the likes of Jonsson and Moya, he made history.

He also had to deal with Andy Roddick in the third round, who was a up-and-coming star. It was a tough match, and Ivanisevic was struggling to close it out. He eventually had two match points, but double faulted on the first one, and made an error on the second. What was he thinking at that moment?

"God, give me another chance," he laughs.

The three Gorans

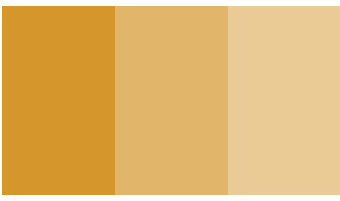
"I felt myself I wondering, 'what am I even doing here?' I wanted to move but could not. The two Gorans in me started to fight one another. They were both nervous. I said, 'guys, calm down.' But they do not listen to me. I felt that I would not come out alive from that situation."

And then what?

"Well, then the third Goran took charge. He arrives when there are emergencies, the one with the brain, and said: 'guys we are in a good position. Relax.' I hit in three aces in a row. It began a new stage of my life." After winning the match, Ivanisevic took off his shirt and threw it into the crowd. On his right shoulder, a tattoo of a rose was visible. He had done it in Los Angeles, but when the tattoo artist asked if he wanted it to be colored in, the Croat jumped up. *"No, friend. Thanks, but that's enough."*

Seventy minutes of pain was all he could stand. In the fourth round, he faced Rusedski. It was one of his more straightforward matches.

"It was nice to see: 15-0, 30-0, 40-0, game. Then the other guy serves, 15-0, 30-0, 40-0, game. Tie-break. Finished. I hoped he was more nervous than me. I had become the quiet type. I did not protest calls so much."



Even on doubtful points, I was calm. To tell you the truth, one of the two Gorans wanted to go to the referee screaming his case. Fortunately, the other would stay calm."

Safin was up next.

"In my life, I have always played for someone," he recalls. "When I started my career, Srdana, my sister, was very sick. She had cancer and I was playing for her because she did not have the money to treat it. Now, thankfully, she is fine. Then the war came, and I had to play for my country, for my people. Before coming here, I said to myself after 12 years around the world, now is the time to play for yourself. Maybe I could play for my father. He was there, with his heart condition, even

though the doctors had forbidden him to come. I think in the last ten years I gave him a lot of trouble" Goran might have been calm, but Safin was not. The Russian could not control his temper, or the match, and Henman awaited in the semi-finals.

"They said that I had not made the most of my talent. But I am most proud of being number 2 in the world behind Sampras. My problem is that in every game I have five opponents: the referee, the crowd, the ball boys, the court and myself. It is no wonder if sometimes my mind wanders."

"It's great to touch the trophy," he smiles. "Whatever I do in my life, wherever I go, I will always be a Wimbledon champion. I want to live every moment and to remember everything."

“Whatever I do in my life, wherever I go, I will always be a Wimbledon champion. I want to live every moment and to remember everything.”

The bookmakers had given Goran a 66/1 chance of winning Wimbledon, and boy did they regret those odds at the end of the fortnight. The final was a match full of anxiety and excitement. Each shot could have been the decisive one. Twice Rafter was two points from the match, but this time it was Goran's match. In December 2001, he announced that he would reflect for six months, and then retired. Today, Goran has a family. In 2009, he married Tatjana Dragovic, with whom he has two children, Amber and Mary. He keeps busy with many things.

**

Ivanišević played football for the Croatian team Hajduk Split in 2001. Goran supports English team West Bromwich Albion. He became a fan after the Midland club's escape from Premiership relegation in 2005. He wore an Albion shirt whilst warming up prior to the 2006 BlackRock Masters final and finally watched his first match in December 2011, as West Bromwich Albion played Queens Park Rangers at Loftus Road. Ivanišević also participated in an exhibition match of the Croatian national team of 1998 versus the International football stars on 7 October 2002 in Zagreb. It was the last career match of Croatian midfielder and team captain Zvonimir Boban.

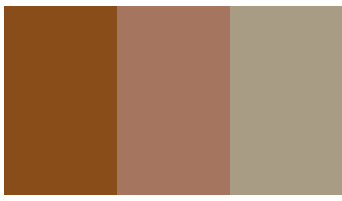


Every now and again he thinks back to that wonderful day, when he shocked the world and himself by finally winning Wimbledon.

We are still waiting for a similar moment, but it was so special that it might never come again



love free wi-fi



John Newcombe was the last of the Great Australians who dominated tennis for two decades in the 50s and 60s.

He won Wimbledon three times (beating even the great Rod Laver) and was also world number one. Today, at almost 70 years of age, he is still filled with passion for tennis. He recently made headlines for suggesting that a fifth Grand Slam be created in China.



An interview with John Newcombe

He made headlines for suggesting that a fifth Grand Slam be created in China

John Newcombe was the last of the Great Australians who dominated tennis for two decades in the 50s and 60s. He won Wimbledon three times (beating even the great Rod Laver) and was also world number one. Today, at almost 70 years of age, he is still filled with passion for tennis.

He recently made headlines for suggesting that a fifth Grand Slam be created in China.

"It depends on the other Slams, but why not?" he explained over the phone in an interview. "It would open the doors to the sport in China, a huge country. If China was willing to pay a billion dollars to the current four Slams, it would be a deal for everyone."

But the Grand Slams are a matter of tradition, not money...

"It's true. But if it started tomorrow, in 50 years the Chinese would have tradition for their Slam. Moreover,

Li Na has already won two Grand Slam titles, and won at the Australian Open this year. I think in the future we will also have a Chinese male winner of a Grand Slam."

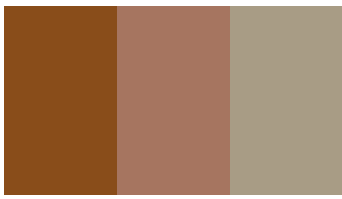
What other changes would you like to see in tennis?

"I wish that the Davis Cup would become a two-week long competition for the Top 8 nations. It should then be played every two or four years on the continent. For example, the quarter-finals in Rome, Paris, London and Hamburg, then the semis in Paris and Wimbledon, and the final at Wimbledon. All the TV coverage would be huge."

You were also an avid doubles player. Do you agree with John McEnroe that the discipline should be abolished?

"I think John has spoken more with his heart than his head. You cannot abolish the doubles, because it is a breeding ground for tennis players.

by Stefano Semeraro



Radaek Stepanek is a good example: He was born as doubles player and twice earned the money needed to become a good singles player. More people in the world play doubles than singles. When Federer played doubles in Brisbane, there was not a single empty seat...

But the problem is that the big names do not play...

"An idea would be to have the singles players at the Masters team up against the qualified doubles teams."

Who do you think is better, Federer or your great friend Rod Laver?

"Impossible to say: who can know how Laver would have played with the new rackets? They were the best in their time, and that's that."

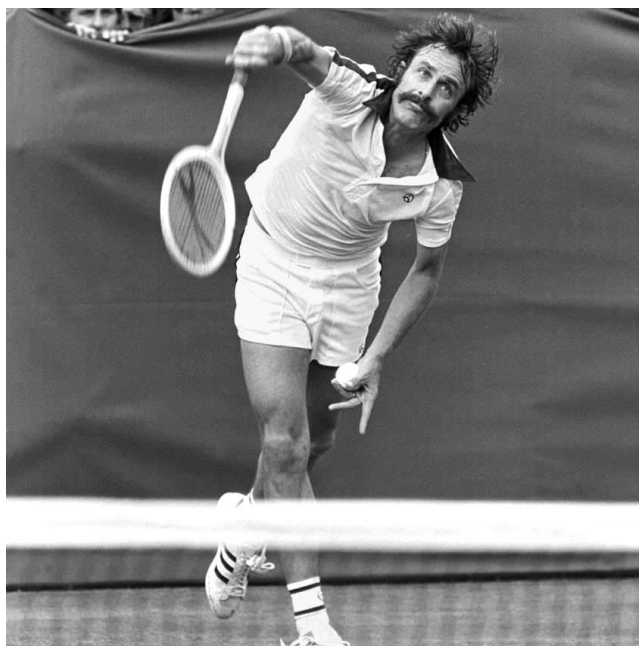
What do you think of the new coaching trends? Becker and Edberg with Djokovic and Federer...and also Lendl and Murray. Is it just a fad?

"It depends on Djokovic and Federer. Murray needed someone like Lendl, who showed him the path to the summit. Small details, but important, and Andy was willing to listen to the advice of Ivan. Now when Murray plays he no longer looks to the stands too often, and doesn't complain as much. As for Becker, I do not see what he could do more than sit in Djokovic's box."

And Federer?

"If he wants to come back to beat Djokovic and Nadal, he must go to the net more often. Groundstrokes do not do it anymore.

When he won his first Wimbledon he played serve and volley on every point.



After that, it was enough to win from the baseline, and he lost the habit of going to the net. But he has lost the art of the volley and is not consistent enough. If he does serve and volley, he does not do so with conviction. I noticed this in Brisbane. Edberg can help with this, but we need to see if Federer is ready to listen."

It is true that to prepare to beat Connors you ran five miles uphill each day and drank beer? "The 'Connors Hills' are still there. The beer story seems to appeal a lot to reporters."

The court today does not seem suitable to serve and volley...

"I never said he has to play that way every point. In Sydney Stakhovsky confused everyone with his speed and his volleys, alternating between the baseline and net. It puts pressure on the opponent."

In 1975, at age 31, you beat the 22 year-old Connors in the final of the Australian Open. Can the 32 year-old Federer still win a Grand Slam?

"I think so. In recent weeks he has trained a lot, and the back problems that have plagued seem to be gone. The body and head are ready, I do not know if the court is. In Sydney I saw too many forehand mistakes. His best chance is at Wimbledon."

It is true that to prepare to beat Connors you ran five miles uphill each day and drank beer? "The 'Connors Hills' are still there. The beer story seems to appeal a lot to reporters."

Today, tennis is lacking personality like his, don't you think?

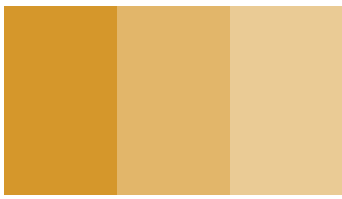
"No, Nadal has many fans, Djokovic brought a new breath, even Ferrer is fascinating for his mettle as a fighter. The game yes, it has become boring. A match like Ferrer - Berdych is not fun. But I like to see someone like Murray: behind every shot there is a thought, not merely a big shot."

There aren't as many top Australians as there used to be...

"We have some interesting youngsters, especially Kyrgios Kokkinakis..."

But the thread of tradition is broken, what happened?

"It happened in 1968, with the arrival of professionalism. We then had maybe 6 of the Top 20 in the world. The federation, however, decided that the "pros" could no longer play the Davis Cup, and all of us could not play it for five years."



"It depends on Djokovic and Federer. Murray needed someone like Lendl, who showed him the path to the summit"

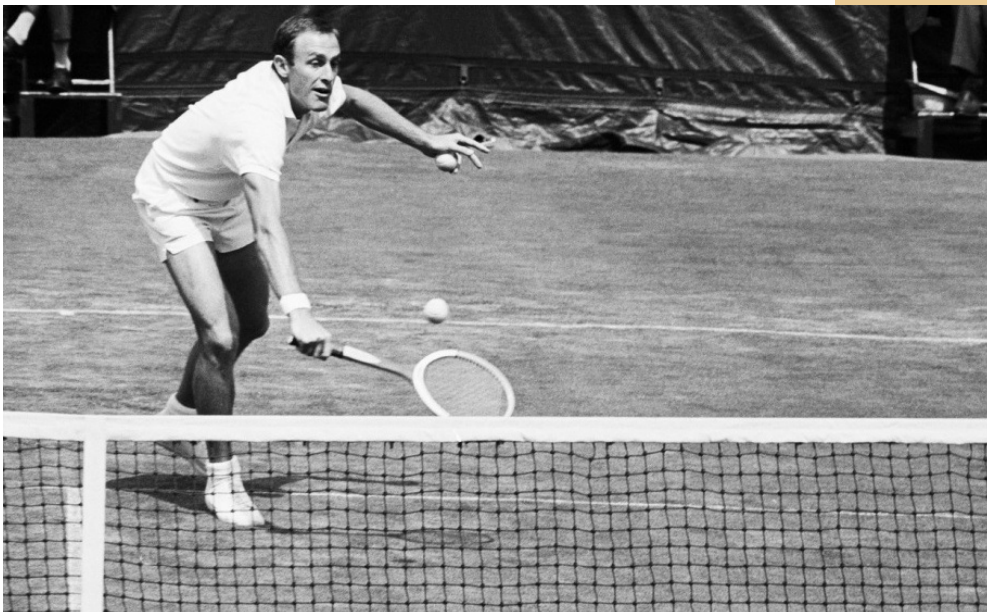
it for five years. We stopped traveling with the young people of that time - Alexander, Dent, Case, Masters. We were unable to transmit the culture and the secret of our play. When a tradition is broken, it is difficult to rebuild it. We started to do it, myself and Roche, in 1980, and the results have been seen with Rafter, Hewitt and Philippoussis. Then after another 10 years, everything has been lost. Now Pat Rafter has resumed the process by becoming Davis Cup captain. It is work that is beginning to pay dividends, and that maybe in two years Hewitt will undertake to carry on. It is a reconstruction that within five or six years will bring Australia into the Top 10 again."

How would you play against Nadal?

"Against Nadal you must serve & volley on at least half of the points, and make the points really short. When Federer can play short points against him, he can make Nadal play a game he doesn't want to, and often wins a set 6-2, or 6-3. But if he is bogged down in rallies, Nadal takes over."

Would you consider coaching?

"No, look: I am married for 46 years, I have six grandchildren and a business in Texas with my tennis ranch. And most of all I have to improve my golf."



If you were forced to choose a student for coaching?

"Any young Australian, like Kokkinakis."

Not Bernard Tomic?

"Bernie has a coach: his father. He has talent, I like him, but must learn to use his power, especially on the forehand and the backhand."



Nicolae Mishu

In tennis, those champions that have been able to hit the big time, leaving a well-marked sign in history, are many. This month, I will tell you about a not very much known personality, who however proved his worth during his years.

Bill Tilden said about him *“The tennis performed by Mishu was out of this world”*

Born in Wien in 1893, but Rumanian by adoption, Nicolae Mishu, was a tennis player during the 20ies of the last Century and also an appreciated diplomatic in much of the world. Bill Tilden said about him “The tennis performed by Mishu was out of this world”.

Formerly, Ian Tiriatic and Ilie Nastase, were certainly the two most known names, like now Cirstea and Halep in women’s tennis, but only few know that during the Twenties, Rumania found in Nicolae Mishu an idol to adulate. If today he is not even remembered by Wikipedia it’s because during his period in Rumania tennis wasn’t relevant, compared to the political problem of the country. The government kept changing: twelve changes from 1918 until 1928. However, his professionalism was appreciated from both political tendencies, liberal and conservative. His peers considered him “the most expert and capable diplomatic man of Rumania”.

And in those years Mishu the champion had the biggest rewards, both political and in sport, among which a crushing victory in Monte Carlo, 6-2 6-0, in 1919, against world’s champion Max Decugis.

In the same year the victories went on in Mentone (also in 1920) and in Cannes, once again against the French Decugis.

In Great Britain he won in Hurlingham and in Hendon.

1919 was, for Nicolae, a very productive year, with more finals played in different international tournaments.

In his record of achievements there is also a defeat in 1926 in a final match against the Italian Placido Gaslini in Cernobbio.

by Salvatore Sodano



Going over some newspapers of those years, it seems like the first real Rumanian histrionic player was Mishu.

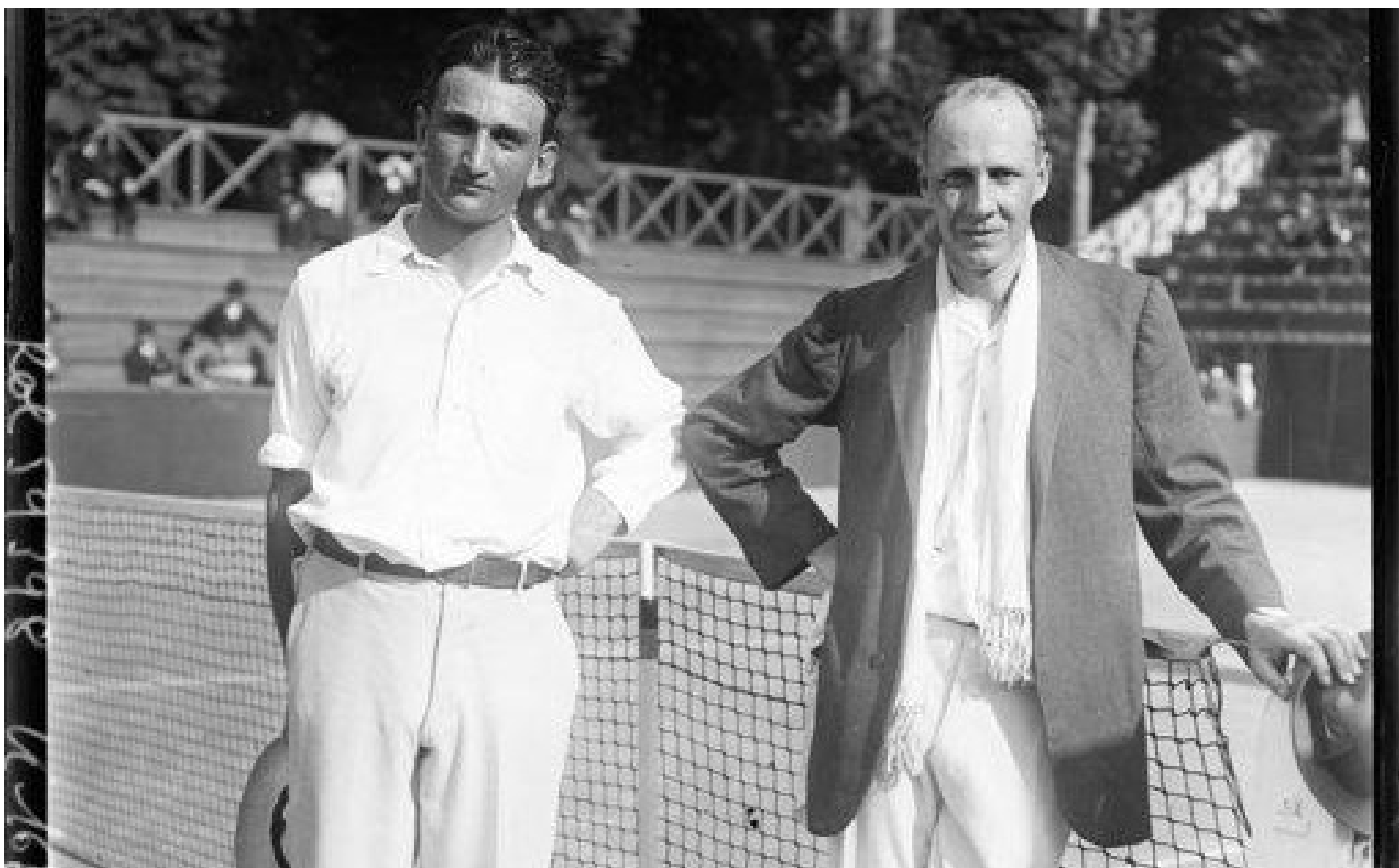
He served with slice or with power, he used to hit topspin forehands and he sank his opponents with lethal backhands, but also with serve and volleys, smashes and half-volleys under the net.

He delighted the public with spectacular shots and he was never described as an unfair player, on the contrary, the organizers esteemed him also because of this characteristic. His opponents liked him mainly because of his congeniality and elegance, both on the court and outside. In other words, he was the Federer of the 20ies, and it was a real pleasure to play against Nick.

In 1921 he defeated André Gobert in St. Cloud, once again a French world champion. This result had a remarkable journalistic resonance, insomuch that, in 1922, the news about his presence among the public during the Davis Cup final in Forest Hill made a sensation.

Praised by the newly born Daily News and by the New York Times, the Rumanian star, as the sport journalists used to call him, had become the most cherished personality of tennis, the opponent that all champions wished for in a "Final Challenge".

In his record of victories also a title as World's Vice Champion on clay in a double match with Marcel Dupont and defeated by the usual couple, Cochet-Borotra.



In 1925 he went to the Roland Garros in Paris as number 7 seed, defeated in the last sixteen by the champion Henry Cochet; in 1927 he was number 9 seed but he retired in the last sixteen against Totò Brugnon after losing the first set.

Obviously, if he never met these French champions that blocked his path, today his name would be in history among the tennis' champions or at least in the International Tennis Hall of Fame's list of famous players, in Newport. Mișu was also the last famous Rumanian player before, thirty long years later, the name of Ion Tiriac came to the fore.

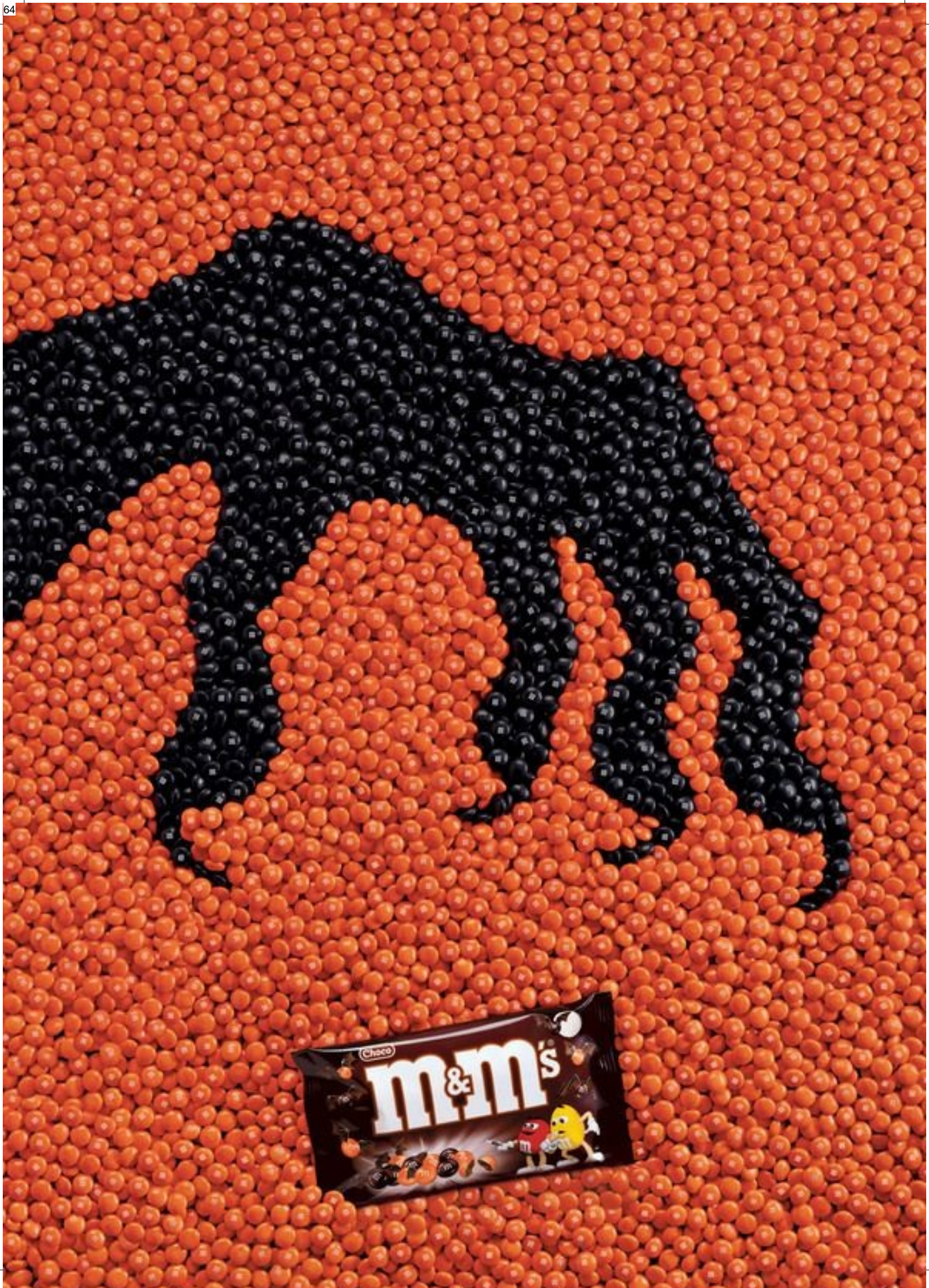
Mișu completed a law degree in Germany and political science studies in Paris.

He was the first envoy of the Romanian monarch in Bulgaria.

He also served as the Envoy Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Vienna, Constantinople and London. While in London, he lobbied for protection of interests of Aromanians in Pind Mountains.

He was also involved in discussions on rights of Jewish minority of Dobruja when it was split between Romania and Bulgaria

From October 15 until November 30, 1919 Mișu was Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania within the Artur Văitoianu cabinet during which Romania became a signatory to the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye.





The best gift of my life

Djokovic-Nadal
Australian Open 2012

di Brent Kruger



Novak Djokovic successfully defended his title after he defeated Rafael Nadal in the longest final in history. The 2012 final passed the 2008 Wimbledon final for the record, finishing after 5 hours and 53 minutes of play.

At that moment, at that precise moment, I was not yet so sure that what Uncle Vladi had given me was

best gift of my life. Of course, my certainty had been growing for quite a while, but I wasn't quite ready to admit it yet.

However, after 313 minutes of a gladiatorial challenge that had transformed Rod Laver Arena into the

Djokovic had an opportunity to become the first man since Rod Laver in 1969 to hold all four Grand Slams at the same time, after winning the previous two in 2011. Nadal went on to become the first player to lose three Grand Slam finals in a row in the Open Era.

Colosseum, I knew that Uncle Vladi's gift would never be topped. The nail in the coffin of my doubt was one single shot, which I knew I would remember for my whole life.

First, though, I have to tell you why I was there.

My name Slavko Dragojevic and I was born in Smeredevo, a city of seventy thousand poor inhabitants. It was the capital of Serbia in 1430, and remained so for nine years, until the Ottomans conquered it after a long siege. I live with my parents and sister in an apartment building near the station, a short walk from the fortress where the Jezava dives into the Danube.

I started school in 2001, a week before September 11. I was 7 years old, then, and the primary school cycle lasted nine years. Eventually, in 2010, I left high school and left for Belgrade, even though my father wanted me to stay and become an agronomist.

I started playing tennis in 2008, year zero for us Serbian lovers of the racket. In January, Djokovic won the Australian Open, and in June, Ivanovic won Roland Garros. I'm not good, but I have a great passion for the sport, and that's what counts. At least that's what my mother says. And it is this passion that has brought me here.



It was the longest match in the history of the Australian Open, and in fact, the longest ever singles final in the Open Era in Grand Slam history; clocked at 5 hours and 53 minutes and ending after midnight with Nadal memorable saying after the match *"good morning."*



Many have an uncle in America, but I have an uncle in Australia: Vladi, my father's brother, who moved there many years ago. He is a bigwig over there now, and works for one of the companies that sponsor the Australian Open. He lives here in Melbourne, where he started a family, and when he heard that I am crazy for tennis and Djokovic, he organized the trip. "You only turn 18 once, and I want it to be really special," he told me over the phone, after announcing the trip. I took an Etihad flight from Belgrade to Melbourne via Abu Dhabi, where everything is upside down. Even the stars in the sky are different! "If you want you can go to see the tournament," my uncle had also said on the call.

"At my company, they reserve a certain number of free tickets. They are good ones as well."

I would have swum across the ocean to get there.

In order to not miss too many days of school, I arrived the second Sunday, when the tournament was already in full swing. After I recovered from the jet lag, I was there on the Monday night for the evening session. I saw Maria Sharapova play Lisicki, then Nole against the darling of Australian, Lleyton Hewitt. There was not an empty seat in the stadium. Just like now.

because Nadal had played his semi-final on the Thursday.

But Nole was not as angry as I was at this injustice. "This is just another match, and the past does not count," he simply said at his press conference. He was, of course, also speaking of his history against Nadal, especially the previous year, when he had beaten the Spaniard several times. Today, while I was walking through the stands after watching the final of the mixed doubles, I thought to myself that the past does matter. For me, but not just for me, the six losses last year seemed to have left a mark on Nadal.

"I would have swum
across the ocean to get there."

Of course, Uncle Vladi could not have known that the final would be between Nole and Rafa.

The draw had hinted at such an outcome, since they were the top two seeds, but there were two other serious contenders for the title: Federer and Murray.

But the Swiss, as usual, ran afoul of Nadal, while the Scot lost to Nole in an epic semi-final.

It was a close-run thing, but after nearly five hours of play, Nole knelt on the court in victory.

My idol (my mom does not like me calling Djokovic that: "Your father, who for thirty years has woken up every single day at four in the morning to go to work, yes, he is an idol") had one day less to recover than Nadal,

After failing several times over the years to close out matches against Nadal, Djokovic started beating him at every turn. It all began in Indian Wells in 2011. After that, he went on to beat his rival on the clay in Madrid and Rome, not to mention Wimbledon and New York. He seemed to have the Spaniard's number.


But in their personal history, in twenty-nine previous installments of this series, they had never gone to five sets, and as we all know, Nadal is the king of the fifth set.

We come then, finally, to the precise moment when the fairy tale could have turned into tragedy, when the princess could have kissed the prince and turned him into a frog.



It was fifty-five minutes after midnight on January 30, in what was already the longest final in the history of the Australian Open. Nadal, who had all the momentum on his side, was serving at 4-2 in the fifth set, and at 30-15. Nole's body language did not bode well. In the preceding five hours, he had earned many chances, but his rival had, one way or another, found his way back into the match. Not even a fantastic cross-court return could stop Nadal on the previous point, as he easily put it away for a winner. Nole's legs were tired, and I wanted something to happen...anything, as long as the torture ended. A sudden storm, a meteorite in the middle of the court, a cramp in the left hand of the Spaniard. Anything.

Instead, Rafa served out wide, and his backhand was hit back towards Nole's backhand, hoping to wrong-foot him. The shot went deep, close to the baseline, and Nole could only tap it back into play. The rally continued from behind the baseline, but it was not long before Nadal hit a weak backhand that landed short. Nole, almost unwillingly took the ball early and approached the net. Unfortunately, his approach was not very good, with little power and too much spin, it went straight towards Nadal's forehand. Without overdoing it, Nadal hit a surgical passing shot down the line. Although I hated it, I had to sportingly admire the Spaniard's power and accuracy.



My hero could do nothing but stick out his racket and hope for the best. As it turned out, his hopes were not realized, and his volley limply floated straight towards Rafa near the service line. Nadal quickly pounced on it for a routine backhand winner...or at least that was the plan.

In hindsight, I can now say, that this was the decisive moment. I had seen Nadal play at least a hundred times and a shot like that he had never missed. He was positioned perfectly, and had a ton of space to hit into. It was a can't-miss proposition. But he missed.

That the momentum had switched from one player to another, one last time.

Suddenly, it seemed that everything that had happened before, the first set won by the Spaniard, 7-5, the two central sets dominated by Djokovic, 6-4, 6-2, and the fourth where he had three break points to go up 5-3, it had all built up to this. Every long rally, every change in momentum and twist of fate, it all seemed somehow meaningless. This was the defining moment.

Only the present remained. And the future.

The two giant big screens revealed what everyone knew already – Nadal had missed

Nole was simply a spectator, as the passing shot flew by him and out. The linesperson's call was clear for everyone to hear, and Nadal's expression turned from delight to horror, as he realized what he had done. He pointed to Pascal Maria, the chair umpire, to request the infamous "hawk eye." But the grimace on his lips betrayed the awareness of an opportunity lost. The two giant big screens revealed what everyone knew already – Nadal had missed.

At that moment, at that very moment, as I watched Djokovic ambulate like a zombie to the baseline and Nadal walk briskly to his end of the court, I thought that the match had changed course.

Two heavy cross-court forehands from Nole forced Nadal into an unlikely recovery mode, and the Serb suddenly had a break point. A strong return that Nadal could not handle saw the break back. 4-3 Nadal, who now shook his head. He thought he had finally exorcised the Djokovic demons, but now they were back to haunt him. After the change of ends, Djokovic motioned for a ball boy to bring him a towel, and for a fleeting moment I thought our eye met.

"I'm at school with your brother Djordje," I wanted to shout at him, but instead I was reasonably limited to watching him stretch his back. Now we were entering the home stretch.




The pain and torment was almost over, but not quite.

After making an error on the next point, Nole hung his head sadly. Even the recovery of the break and the rest between the change of ends was not enough to inject new blood into his system. Then there was another exchange, with superhuman Nadal relentlessly beating on Nole's backhand. But the Serb somehow managed to stay strong. Nole did not hit any first serves, but Nadal could not capitalize, and was not aggressive enough. Another opportunity missed. So we arrived at 4-4, and Djokovic kissed the crucifix around his neck.

The ninth game opened with thirty-two strokes of pure suffering, the last of which was an off-balance backhand that Nole missed. He slumped to the ground, destroyed. It was no longer a game of tennis, it was a test of survival. Djokovic did his best to shorten rallies as much as possible. A bunt that died on the tape, a backhand winner, a great return and finally some mistakes from Nadal, and suddenly Nole had some break points. But the Spaniard's tenacity quickly cancelled it, and at the change of sides the Spaniard was ahead 5-4.

I had a bad feeling, but the short break seemed to revitalize Nole,



and only one double fault prevented him from closing the tenth game to love. With a grunt, Nadal hit a forehand winner in the next game. It seemed impossible, after nearly six hours, but his technique remained unchanged. He continued on with his pre-point rituals: a couple of bounces of the ball, arranging his shorts, brushing his hair back, then touching his nose and adjusting the hair on the other side. All of this before serving. On the second point, Nadal again tried to hit a big forehand, but slipped and lost the point. The next exchange, following a second serve, was

Nadal relied on a banana, Nole on fruit juice, for energy. The first two points went to Djokovic, without too much trouble, but then Nole hit a forehand long – 30-15. The next point, a smash, also went to Nadal, and it was 30-30. Some incredible defense from Nadal and an incredible passing shot, and it was 30-40. Break point. A nightmare. Nole displayed some incredible courage on the next point, hitting a crazy cross-court backhand that was too much for Rafa. It was deuce, and my hand went to my heart as I looked up. Nole did the same.

It does not get any better than that. Thanks Uncle Vladi, for the most beautiful birthday gift of my life.

dominated by Djokovic. Now it was 15-30. The Serb tried a lob, but Nadal was quick enough to cut it off. It seemed impossible, but even after all this time, Nadal was still everywhere on the court, tenacious and fierce. Another exchange and another hard forehand saw Djokovic pushed back, but on the next point he created yet another opportunity, when the fatigued Spaniard couldn't quite reach on a defensive backhand. I was at the very edge of my green seat. I was fascinated by the look on Nole's face, which was screwed up in concentration, completely focused on putting an end to this duel. He got the break, and was now within reach of the goal. Just one more game, but how far that game seemed!

Another crosscourt backhand and Nole was within a point of triumph. He raised his finger to the sky. A point. One point. A first serve lands, and the return is in the middle of the court. Djokovic hits a forehand, and it is over. Nole fell to the ground, and then hugged his rival. After that, he tore apart his Sergio Tacchini shirt to show off the body that had brought him this far. It was the seventh labor of Hercules, the hardest one. It was the first time Djokovic had beaten Nadal in a fifth set. It does not get any better than that. Thanks Uncle Vladi, for the most beautiful birthday gift of my life.

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Arabesque Tennis is Dance

by Andrea Guarracino



In tennis, the most graceful and plastic movement is certainly the position of the arabesque that tennis players perform at the end of the serve movement, where, after having looked for the maximum height in the moment of contact with the high-forward ball, they fall inside the court with the front foot, obviously only after the contact with the ball, counterbalancing the movement inside the court and the overturn of the shoulders' level with the back leg, imitating the marvelous arabesque position that is performed by ballerinas in classic dance. Here we see the most admirable performer of this marvelous tennis movement, the strong and beautiful Russian tennis player Maria Sharapova.

Do you perform the arabesque at the end of your serve movement?



"Looking Ahead"

An interview with Chris Kermode

Men's tennis in 2014 is a billion dollar industry so you could forgive the new chief executive of the ATP for feeling a little nervous as he began his post at the helm of what he calls 'the greatest sport on the planet' at the start of this year.

However while this may be a considerably daunting challenge for Chris Kermode, the popular 49 year old Brit could hardly be more equipped for his new role having already enjoyed successful stints as tournament director for two hugely successful tournaments in Queen's and the ATP World Tour Finals. His work on both events earned him the respect of Roger Federer and Andy Murray both of whom voiced their approval at his appointment.

However while this may be a considerably daunting challenge for Chris Kermode, the popular 49 year old Brit could hardly be more equipped for his new role having already enjoyed successful stints as tournament director for two hugely successful tournaments in Queen's and the ATP World Tour Finals. His work on both events earned him the respect of Roger Federer and Andy Murray both of whom voiced their approval at his appointment.

"To go into the job with this much support has been fantastic," Kermode said. "It's been quite overwhelming actually, with players sending great messages off support when the news came through."

One of the many challenges Kermode faces is trying to satisfy everyone's concerns, with the elite wanting various tweaks to the calendar while the tour's journeymen are largely concerned with making the sport financially viable for more players.

Kermode himself knows all too well how difficult life can be as a lower ranked player, having once competed on the futures tour (the third tier of men's tennis) back in the '80s, never making it inside the world's top 700.

"For me, it's about listening to everybody - everybody needs to have their voice heard, so it's about being as engaging and as approachable as possible, and then building any decisions through consensus," he said.

"I think my past experience as a player is hugely important. I got a taste of hacking around as a very average player, but I understand what players go through. I clearly don't have the experience of a Top 10 player because I was never a Top 10 player, but I have an understanding of where the players are coming from, and the struggle and the difficulties playing the qualifying rounds of tournaments."

by David Cox



Despite the huge revenue streams that men's tennis generates these days, one of the problems so far has been the fact that the cash doesn't filter down to support the game at the lower levels and Kermode is planning to tackle this by increasing the prize money at challenger tournaments. *"This year, we're increasing our minimum prize money levels on the Challenger Tour to \$40,000 and we hope to eventually increase that to \$50,000. Ensuring growth across the Challenger Tour is incredibly important so that will be a key focus for the organization moving forward."*

If you look back through the past few decades, men's professional tennis has had a habit of generating some of the most recognisable athletes and captivating rivalries in sport – from the likes of Borg, McEnroe, Becker, Sampras, Agassi, Federer, Nadal and Djokovic."

"People talk about the changing of the guard, and it's going to be very exciting to see who emerges in the next few years."

Just as recently as this year's Australian Open, we've seen how well the likes of Grigor Dimitrov, Kei Nishikori and Milos Raonic performed."

"We're one of the few truly global sports, with 61 tournaments across 30 countries throughout the year, featuring many of the most iconic athletes in all sport"

One of my main responsibilities in leading this organisation is to ensure that we see growth across all levels of the sport, and that we make the sport more appealing and financially viable to younger players who are starting out in their careers."

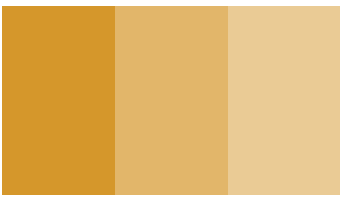
Kermode says that one of the important parts of his job is building for the future and right now he's looking to ensure that the game remains successful even after the end of the hugely popular Federer/Nadal/Djokovic/Murray era. *"We're one of the few truly global sports, with 61 tournaments across 30 countries throughout the year, featuring many of the most iconic athletes in all sport,"* he said. *"Many people have asked me what we're going to do after this golden generation of players retires."*

And we've seen the emergence of two young Australians in Nick Krygios and Thanasi Kokkinakis – two very exciting prospects."

"As an organisation, we have to be ready from a promotional and marketing perspective to build on the next generation of stars, and the strength of our global platform of tournaments on the Tour will certainly help us to do that."

Kermode will also be adding a little more variety to the tour, both in terms of court speed and geographical location with the addition of a number of new events in China.

"There's been tremendous growth in the game in China in the past 10-15 years," he said.



“There’s been tremendous growth in the game in China in the past 10-15 years”

“This year, China will become the first tournament outside the United States to host ATP events across all three tournament categories, with a new ATP World Tour 250 event in Shenzhen joining the Tour, alongside our ATP World Tour 500 event in Beijing and our ATP World Tour Masters 1000 event in Shanghai. There’s a huge amount of appetite for growth in the region, and we need to look at ways of facilitating and encouraging that growth in order to create the biggest and strongest events possible. That can only be good for the game overall, but whether that means reaching Grand Slam status is a different matter.”

But when it comes to court speed, he’s quick to remind us that essentially we always want what we can’t have. *“When you look back, court speed is something that has continuously evolved – I remember in the 1990s when everyone was talking about how fast the courts were - too much big serving and not enough rallies,”* he points out. *“It’s true that there’s been a tendency to slow down the courts. But in terms of on court spectacle, I think we can all agree that we’ve seen some of the most incredibly titanic battles over the past 10 years or so. The guys are moving quicker and hitting the ball harder than ever before, and the battles they’ve had have truly transcended the sport.”*

Male tennis Curiosities



▲ ROGER FEDERER

Pete Sampras' successor was born in Binninge (Switzerland) on August 8th 1981, in Basle's canton, from a South African mother and a Swiss father. Since he was a child, he stood out for his character and when he was 16 he decided to quit school and exclusively devote to tennis. This didn't prevent him from perfectly learning 3 languages: English, French and German. "Big Roger" is smart both inside and outside the tennis court.

▼ NOVAK DJOKOVIC

The Serbian tennis player is known for his very peculiar humor. His increasing impersonations of his circuit's colleagues on YouTube are just an example of his personality.

Another feature of his character that maybe you didn't know is his strong sentimentalism. He defines himself as an authentic romantic and he tells us he is deeply in love with his partner Jelena Ristic





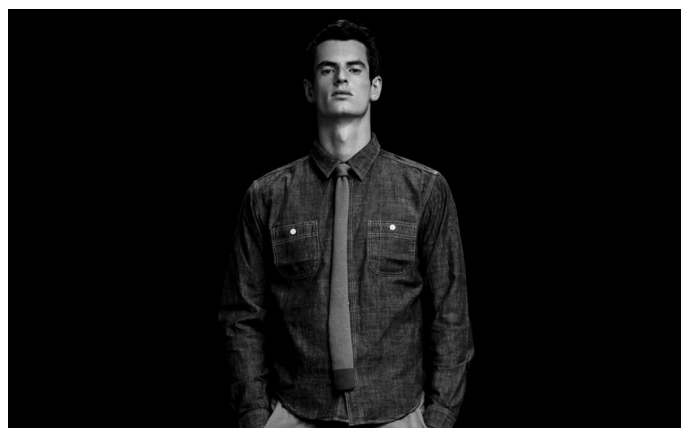
▲ DAVID FERRER

Only few know that the guy from Javea has a deep passion for literature. In particular, he says he is fond of Arturo Perez-Reverte, even if he doesn't want to pick just one favorite book by this author. Besides, when he first entered the professional circuit, it wasn't easy for him: in fact, he quit tennis for some time because of some negative results and he started doing odd jobs to survive.



▼ ANDY MURRAY

Do you know what this Scottish guy always brings along in his endless journeys? His iPod. He is very fond of music and his best technological friend contains a huge amount of songs among which there are Black Eyed Peas, Eminem and 50 Cent.



◀ RAFAEL NADAL

If there is an adjective that can define Rafa outside the tennis court, that is, without a doubt, homely. In fact, he likes to spend time with his family, in his home town, Manacor. He also likes fishing and enjoying his city. On the top of being a Real Madrid fan, he can spend hours playing futsal, both outdoor and on the Play Station with his friends, among which Juan Monaco and David Ferrer.



▲ TOMAS BERDYCH

Do you know this tennis player's habits?
Now we'll reveal you one.
He doesn't shave his beard, together with
his team, when he loses a match.
Will we see Berdych with a Robinson
Crusoe's beard one day?



▼ JUAN MARTIN DEL POTRO

Did you know that "Delpo" dreamed of
becoming a soccer player when he was a
child?

He started playing soccer when he was
very young and only when he turned 12 he
decided to grab a tennis racquet. Currently,
soccer keeps being one of his big
passions.

Can you imagine "Delpo" as a soccer
player?



◀ JANKO TIPSAREVIC

Something very different from making balls
bounce on the tennis court. He tells us he
likes to make his friends dance when he
performs his second passion: the deejay.
He assures that this hobby might continue
after he quits tennis.

Can you imagine a DJ Janko with his
sunglasses in one of the most famous
privée?

Female Tennis Curiosities



▲ VICTORIA AZARENKA

Even professional tennis players have idols, if these are also world's "number one".

For Victoria Azarenka, since she was a child, Steffi Graf was one of them. In addition, outside the tennis court, she is still a fan of Madonna, Justin Timberlake, disco music and Russian music. Could you imagine?

▼ SERENA WILLIAMS

The current queen of the female tennis circuit says that some of her passions are fashion and shopping with her sister or with her girlfriends. Last year she started working as a fashion designer. In fact, Serena attended various Fashion Design courses and later she also launched her own clothing line with the name "Aneres", her name spelled backwards.





▲ MARIA SHARAPOVA

The gorgeous Russian tennis player travels all over the world during her tennis tours, but do you know her favorite city? New York. Maria reveals us that she loves spending as much time as possible in the “Big Apple” enjoying fashion, shopping, jazz, the company of a good book like Sherlock Holmes or Harry Potter or watching a good film.



▼ AGNIESZKA RADWANSKA

Who said that professional sportswomen and sportsmen have never studied in their life? Among the many hard steps of her life, this top player loves studying languages. Do you know which ones she can perfectly speak? Polish, English and German.



◀ SARA ERRANI

We don't know if it is true, but it seems that Sara Errani has origins from Alicante, or at least a bound with that land. Why? She speaks Spanish and her coach is Pablo Lozano from Calpe, a small town half an hour from Alicante. But he's not the only one from Alicante that she admires, among others there's also David Ferrer.



▲ CAROLINE WOZNIACKI

Who said that girls don't like soccer? Caroline loves playing soccer, swimming and playing golf. She is a very active girl, who apart from practicing sport, she likes to watch it. One of the sports she adores watching on TV the most is boxing, which deserves to be watched by a very tough girl, isn't it?



▼ ANGELIQUE KERBER

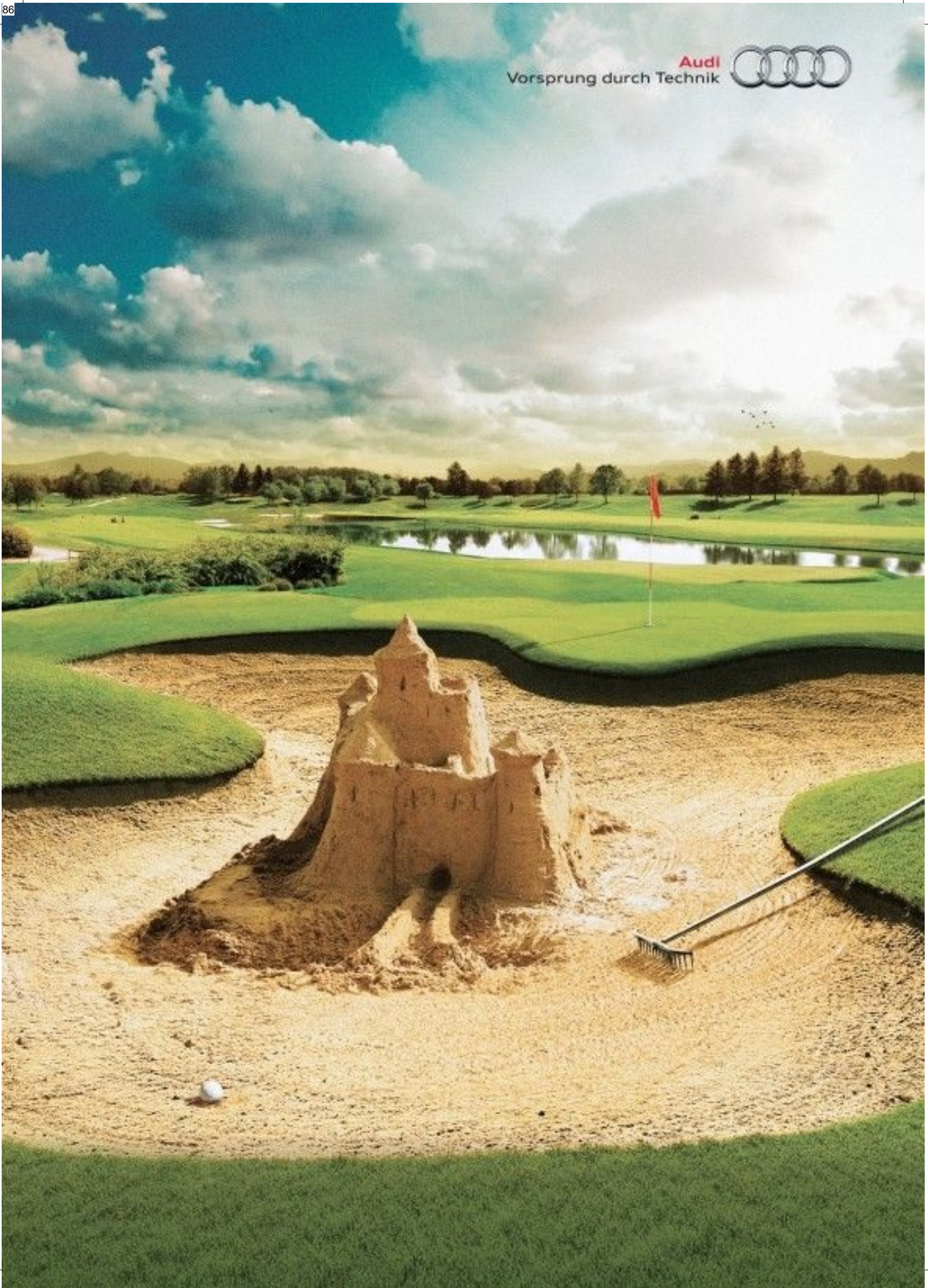
One of the things the player from Bremen loves is sleeping a lot and she admits it. She says that when she sleeps more, also her efficiency on the court improves. Also, during her free time she loves hanging out with her girlfriends and the next day recovering with a long sleep.

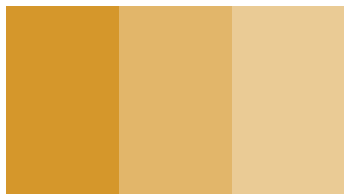


◀ SAMANTHA STOSUR

Where to take this tennis player that travelled the whole planet?
On a marvelous beach.
She adores the sea and her dream vacation is on a small yacht with her closest friends.

Audi
Vorsprung durch Technik





Winners from Valencia

by Stefania Grosheva

The Valencia's Community region, as confirmed by its traditions, is offering to the tennis review more and more excellent quality players.

The Valencia's Community region, as confirmed by its traditions, is offering to the tennis review more and more excellent quality players. Juan Carlos Ferrer or Marat Safin are some of the names that grew and made this land famous. Currently Ferrer, who recently won in Buenos Aires against Fognini, made stable among the world's best players; Tita Torró Flor, a young promising player from Alicante, is the third Spanish in WTA's ranking, Silvia Soler Espinosa, who has been part of the Iberian national team since last year, offers a highly competitive tennis that is intended to improve. Now let's analyze this area's best players and the new promising ones that will have to replace the old players.

DAVID FERRER **New Year, New Life**

David Ferrer was born in Javea, a small town near Alicante, on April 2nd 1982.

Named "Ferru" by his fans, he reached his career's maturity around his 30's. He won his first Master 1000 title in Paris, a tournament that had never been won by a Spanish player before. He ended 2012 as the ranking's player with more victories and he is the current number 4 in the ATP's ranking.

The year 2012 was his year: the player from Javea gathered 7 titles, becoming for three times the champion of the "Abierto Mexicano de Tennis".



Once, as a teenager, when Ferrer did not practice hard enough, his coach, Javier Piles, locked him in a completely dark 2m x 2m ball closet for several hours, giving him only a piece of bread and a bit of water. After this incident he was fed up with tennis and went to work at a construction site, but after a week he returned to Piles to play tennis.



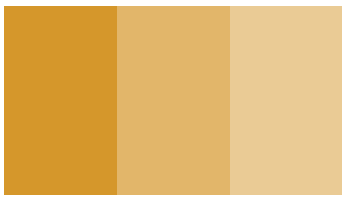
In fact, Ferrer revealed us in different occasions that that was a unique year. In 2013 he won in Buenos Aires and in Auckland, getting to the final in Miami against Andy Murray after a 3 set endurance race.

Right now, David, who has recently changed his memorable coach, Javier Piles instead of José Altur, is back to the 4th position in the world's ranking, looking for a further growth in his career.

MARIA TERESA TORRO FLOR **Waiting for her consecration**

Maria Teresa Torro Flor was born in Villena, on May 2nd 1992.

Tita was built in Juan Carlos Ferrero's academy and now she's the 21-year-old main hope for the Spanish female tennis. Currently, she keeps the record of wins in the history of Spanish female tennis on clay, amounting to a



total of 36, surpassing Conchita Martinez who got to 26 wins. The young player from Alicante won 11 ITF tournaments and in 2012 she won for the first time the Absolute Championship of Spain. This victory arrives after winning 6 consecutive championships in which she showed her top level. Her career is based not only on individual competition, but also on the double. In fact, she plays with Garbine Muguruza and in 2013 they triumphed in Australia at "Moorilla Hobart International" beating Timea Babos and Mandy Minella in the final. To this day she is number 63 in the WTA's ranking, an excellent position, considering that she started in 2012 being number 459 and with a serious injury that stopped her for 6 months

(a tendonitis in her left knee). According to her statements to our magazine, she feels very proud of having been called to play for the national team in Alicante, her home, and being a national team's strong point, despite the recent defeat against the Czech Republic.

SILVIA SOLER ESPINOSA "Outsider" in singles, a guarantee in doubles

Silvia Soler Espinosa was born on November 19th 1987 in Elche. She won 4 titles in the ITF circuit in the individual category, but we can't forget her path in doubles where she is currently number 44. The seasons before 2012, when she entered the first 100 positions, helped her in becoming stable in the ranking.



Also, after a serious injury, she took part to the Olympic Games representing the Spanish female tennis, even if with little luck, since she lost in the first round.

However, as she assures, it was the most important experience at that point in her life.

Currently she has lost some positions in the single ranking, going to number 77, whereas in doubles her level stays stable keeping number 42 as her best position.

Besides, together with her countrywoman Tita Torro, she was called last year by the national team for the match against Ukraine in Alicante.



Learning To Love Lefties

When he first started winning on the ATP Tour, many reporters compared Rafa Nadal to another clay court monster, Thomas Muster. Nadal, with the half-smile that accompanies all his press conferences, insisted that the similarities ended with the fact that

they were both left-handed.

At the end of 2013 season, when Nadal again closed out the season as world number one, it was as clear as ever that his left-handedness had a massive impact on his career.

Of course, Rafa uses his left hand when he plays tennis, and he also kicks with his left foot. But he does everything else with his right hand, such as eating, writing and playing golf.

The envy of McEnroe

But on the court, his left hand does the talking. His forehand is his most devastating shot, and he can generate inhuman amounts of top spin with it. *"Well, that's a shot that I would have liked,"* John McEnroe has said of Nadal's forehand.

Of course, McEnroe also plays left-handed.

Yet perhaps Nadal's biggest weapon on the court is his toughness. He is capable of carrying on when most of his peers would have already thrown in the towel.

A prime example of this is the final in Rome in 2005, when the Spaniard played against Guillermo Coria. Nadal had a series of blisters on his hand that were tormenting him, but instead of letting it get him down, he fought through the pain in an epic five hour marathon. He won in a fifth set tie-break.

Some time later, when I was interviewing him, I asked him a question. *"Rafa, which of all your titles in Rome were the most special?"*

He did not hesitate. *"Those of 2005 and 2006,"* he replied. *"Winning two battles after more than five hours, the matches that you feel are out of hand but then you are able to win in the end. These are the matches that give you joy. The danger averted, the recovery and victory. Who could ask for more in a match of tennis?"*

Nadal is not a masochist, he is just a fighter.

Perhaps it is also because of these kinds of stories that lefties are seen as whimsical warriors.

by Dario Torromeo

It was called "the hand of the devil" in many parts of the world, and parents often tied their children's left hands behind their back, forcing them to use the right one.

Parents against it

It was not too long ago that being left-handed carried with it massive stigma. It was called "the hand of the devil" in many parts of the world, and parents often tied their children's left hands behind their back, forcing them to use the right one.

Even today, many references to left-handers are negative.

For example, in Italy if someone is a delinquent, you say that they "look left," and if you are in a bad mood during the day, you say that you "got out of bed on your left foot."

In French, they say "qu'il east gauche," which means "he is awkward."

In Spanish, "no ser zurdo" means "to be not left-handed," but also "to be smart."

In Greek, they call left-handers "skaaios," which has an ominous undertone to it.

In German, the two terms that indicate lefties are "links" and "linkisch," which are also used to describe someone who is clumsy.

In Islamic culture, left-handedness is not seen positively, as activities such as eating or brushing are always performed with the right hand.

The left is given to the cleaning of the private parts.

Distinguished scientists in the past claimed that left-handedness was a hereditary condition (as if it were a disease), while others claimed that it was a symptom of a mother that gave birth at too advanced an age.



Another interesting note relates to Grand Slam wins. Of the 183 Slams played in the Open Era, left-handers have won 42 times (22.9%), although 29 of those victories came from just three men (Nadal, Connors and McEnroe).

All lefties have a common difficulty when it comes to playing against other lefties. The only exception is Rafa Nadal, who has a winning percentage of 82.9% against right-handers (590 W/122 L), while against lefties he has won 90.5% of his matches (67 W / 7 L) .



But there is also the other side of the moon. The positive side. Many think that left-handers are more creative, with greater imagination.

Talented lefties

The sports world has never had a shortage of left-handed players. Diego Maradona, Bobby Charlton, Gigi Riva, Mariolino Course, John McEnroe, Jimmy Connors, Rod Laver, Ayrton Senna and Valentino Rossi are just a small sample of famous sports people who were lefties.

Jimi Hendrix was also left-handed, but had no trouble playing with his right hand when the mood took him.

But that doesn't mean they aren't fierce: Marvin Hagler, Manny Pacquiao and Bruno Arcari were all lefties.

In boxing, being a left-hander means that someone is a "southpaw."

It is also sometimes called the "false guard," since some people believed left-handed boxers could not properly protect their vulnerable body parts, like the heart, mouth, stomach and liver, in their guard stance.

Addressing a lefty

Facing a lefty in sport is often difficult, because it is upsets the usual dynamics of combat.

The right hemisphere of the brain (which controls the left hand) is the one that is traditionally associated with creativity and artistry.

And then there is Bob Dylan and Paul McCartney, the Heads of State Bill Clinton, Fidel Castro, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Harry Truman and Barack Obama. The actors Charlie Chaplin and Robert De Niro. The artists Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Picasso and Raphael. Leaders such as Julius Caesar, Napoleon Bonaparte and Alexander the Great.

The creative hemisphere

The right hemisphere of the brain (which controls the left hand) is the one that is traditionally associated with creativity and artistry. It has among its functions the perception of three-dimensionality, creativity and imagination. Lefties are the noble wing of mankind.

This is especially true in individual sports like boxing and tennis.

The left-hander, of course, has no problems.

He is accustomed to dealing with right-handers, because they represent such a large part of society.

But centuries of superstition is finally falling away, and left-handers are no longer seen as strange or bad.

A study done in the early years of the twentieth century reported that only 3% of the world was left-handed.

Today, that percentage has nearly quadrupled to around 11%.

So people are no longer forcing their children to be right-handed when they are actually born as lefties.



The (un)natural forehand

Nadal used to play right-handed. But one day he decided to try as a lefty. Soon he found that his forehand became incredibly explosive when played from the left. The Spaniard is capable of generating as much as 4900 RPM on his forehand, whereas most players are lucky to generate half that on a normal shot.

The legend is that his uncle Toni forced him to make the change to a lefty. This is not true.

Toni still likes to joke that *"Rafa would be better as a right-hander."*

Use of "the devil's hand" was considered almost a sin until recently. In the 1920s it was associated with dementia and in the 1940s with dyslexia. Only since the 1970s has this view truly ceased.

STATS

We analyzed the data of the 150 players in the Open Era that have had the best winning percentage. This ranking is led by Rafa Nadal with 659 victories, 129 losses and a win percentage of 83.6%.

There are 17 left-handers in the list, which equates to about 11% (the same % of left-handers in the world). Of these, 10 are in the Top 50, and 5 in the Top 11.

Among these 17 players, 14 were in the Top 5 at some point in their career, 10 were in the Top 2 and 6 were #1 (or 24% of the total). Here's the list:

Top tier: Laver, Connors, McEnroe, Muster, Rios, Nadal.

Second tier: Orantes, Vilas, Korda, Ivanisevic.

Third tier: Tanner, Gomez, Rusedski.

Fourth tier: Leconte.



SAVE YOURSELF FROM BAD ASS





360 Ball

A new racquet sport

by Stefania Grosheva



360ball, as the name of the game alludes to, is a racquet and ball game played in a circular court and was developed in the Garden Route, in South Africa.

Tennis lovers, we are lucky: 360 ball is coming. This new sport, created in South Africa, consists of a blend between tennis and paddle. You play inside a sort of round cage with one disc in the center of the field. It's a racquet sport played single or double and the goal is to hit the person so that the ball bounces in the center. Currently, this sport is played in South Africa, Spain, France and Germany.

“Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, si
dici consectetur adipiscing elit
suspendere integre.”

360 ball exists in different versions:
pro-court, mobile (portable court), and
practice (pitch version).

Pro-court: this is the professional
version.

Mobile: it refers to a court that you can
carry to the beach, to the field,
wherever you want!

With a total setup time under 25
minutes this will bring the sport to the
people. The new Mobile Court will
allow players to experience 360ball on
a fun and social level, and at the same
time act as a stepping stone to the Pro-
Court version.

Practice: it was conceived to train and
you can do it everywhere and without
walls.

RULES

- Each player will be free to move
around the central disc.
- Every team must hit the ball twice.
- If it's a double match, each player
must hit the ball once before it's the
opponent's turn.
- The double hit is mandatory before
you throw the ball against the central
disc.



Although the game in a
circle has its origins as a
back yard contest between
brothers Mark and John
Collins who used to bounce
a ball of a circular wooden
disc, it is today hardly
recognizable from its
original format.



Gosh, I so feel it today !

It's 12.30 p.m. and my mother calls me for lunch. At 4 p.m. there's my tournament's match. As usual my meal consists of 100 grams pasta with tomato sauce and 100 grams raw ham without bread.

This is life, we learn and we grow up through sensations, that is to say the changes of our neurological system caused by the external environment that comes into contact with us through our senses.

The smell of tomatoes gets into my room, I come to the kitchen and the intense and salty taste of ham reminds me, as always, of the upcoming match. It's 3.30 when I get to the club for my match.

I run slowly for 10 minutes around the court to warm up.

I feel my heart beating hard because of tension.

I concentrate on breathing in order to relax.

It's 4 p.m. and I'm on the court to warm up. I intensely look at the ball to get into the match, I inhale and exhale in rhythm with the shot. I concentrate on feeling my footholds on the ground and keeping my center of gravity under control.

I have a strange feeling of a slight pain in my elbow, remains of the previous match, but I try not to lend weight to it. I listen to the sound of the ball on my opponent's strings, on my court and on my strings, to improve my timing. I try to feel the grip of every shot and relax it between each shot in order not to tense up.

The match begins, I still feel a bit nervous during the first games.

I think positive, when I feel like this I am full of energy and after a few minutes I will relax and I will play very well.

My prediction comes true and I clearly win in two sets, playing my best tennis. This is life, we learn and we grow up through sensations, that is to say the changes of our neurological system caused by the external environment that comes into contact with us through our senses.

Each one of us elaborates this information in different ways.



Sport champions are able to analyze within few seconds an incredible amount of information coming both from the outside and from their own body.

The canals through which we receive this information are: visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory, gustatory, the kinesthetic and balance canal and the canal of well-being or pain sensations. It is very important to know that each individual has its own preferential hierarchy when using these canals. Big painters, for instance, use the visual canal first, great musicians use the auditory one.

Great athletes are almost all kinesthetic, so they mainly learn through the sensations that the movements make them feel in their bodies while they perform the athletic action.

A great tennis player is able to perfectly feel the perfect stance, the grip, the unit turn, the shoulders' incline angle, the strings' pattern incline and I could go on and on. A great cyclist can perfectly feel and handle the heartbeat and breathing and so he can improve the neuro-muscular effort.

It is important to know that we are all born with a particular preference for the kinesthetic canal, compared to the auditory and visual one, and that during the course of life this preference is reversed.

For instance, currently in Europe 55% of people are preferably visual, 20% auditory and 25% kinesthetic. For us tennis teachers it's important to know which is our junior players' preferred channel through which they elaborate



information (in this regard I invite all of you to read Umberto Longoni's book "Questione di testa") and if you are in doubt you better use all three of them, explaining your junior players what they have to do, showing them the correct technical action, but above all trying in all ways to make them feel the most efficient biomechanical action in their bodies, because, as I've already said, it is through this channel that in tennis you will get the most important information.

If we will be good teachers one day also our junior players, while winning a match playing perfectly, they will exult by saying: *"gosh, I so feel the ball today"*.



Hit a Forehand Winner Like Roger Federer

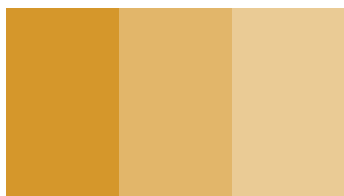
Watching the best in the world is like watching poetry in motion.

They have become maestros at performing plays to perfection.

The Slice backhand set up for the inside in or inside out forehand winner is one of Federer's favorite plays.

If you learn to put it together, you will develop a weapon everyone will fear.

Watch the video



Preparing for the match

What is required in order for a player to be physically, mentally and tactically 'ready' for the match?

What little tricks can help us achieve top match performance?

Here's how a tennis player should get organised. From stretching exercises to food advice. From facilitating concentration to care of the equipment.

Everything a tennis player needs to be perfect right from the first 'fifteen'.

'Preparing for the match' refers to a series of measures which allow the player to give his best because he is physically, mentally and tactically 'ready' to face the match. If it is true that matches are won on the court, it is equally true that the better the approach to the match, the easier it is for the tennis player's competitive performance to be positively affected.

1. Physical preparation. Warming up, stretching.
2. Mental preparation. Relaxation, visualisation, establishing rituals designed to promote concentration.
3. Tactical preparation. Establishing goals, establishing a match strategy, how to leverage the pre-match rally.
4. What to eat. Following clear rules for food and beverage intake.
5. Equipment. Packing of the bag; checking and maintenance of equipment.

Physical preparation.

Let's learn to warm up. On many occasions I have seen players (especially among the very young) starting off a match and losing the first game because they are insufficiently 'warm' to give their 100% right from the first point.

It is absolutely wrong to play down the importance of the first game thinking that "the match has only just begun" and considering it almost an extension of the warm-up or even a time to calibrate one's shots.

A game given away at the beginning of a match may not seem too important, but it might cost the loss of a set.

In some situations (e.g. a match played on a fast surface, mental fragility of the opponent) a break in the opening game may prove decisive for the final outcome of the match as it may positively or negatively shift its psychological and tactical equilibrium.

If the organisation of the tournament allows it, the ideal would be to warm up on the court prior to the start of the match.



Professionals rally before entering the court; they play a few points and basically revisit the game tactics during a period that can vary between a minimum of 30 minutes and a maximum of one hour. Considering that the organisation of smaller tournaments can hardly afford to reserve a court for training (especially while the first rounds are being disputed), it is appropriate to explore alternative warm-up methods. Even 10 minutes of jogging are enough. Weather permitting and if the club where the tournament is played has a green area - or in the absence of spaces available, even on the tennis

damaging the sensitivity of the arm-racquet system and the general muscular fluidity, fundamental prerogatives to best expressing one's potential.

Stretching is synonymous with relaxation, therefore it is recommended to perform the exercises in a quiet place, in the club gym or even better in the shade of a tree. The time of stretching is closely connected to the mental preparation for the match.

While stretching, a player must increase his concentration and focus his attention on the tactical pace of the match, revisiting his intentions

Stretching is synonymous with relaxation, therefore it is recommended to perform the exercises in a quiet place, in the club gym or even better in the shade of a tree.

courts - 5-10 minutes of jogging followed by footwork drills are sufficient to set the body in motion. The more common types of drills are: heel kicks, sidestep slides alternatively facing the centre and the outside of the court and skipping.

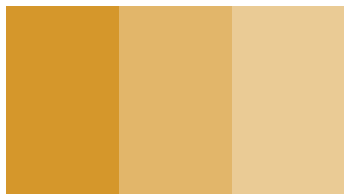
If the warm-up is done around the perimeter of the tennis court, after several minutes of continuous jogging, one can alternate a slow run along the short sides of the court with the above mentioned drills on the two long sides. Don't forget the stretching.

Doing some muscle stretching exercises shortly before the match is very important.

Before an important match, nervous tension is often so high that it is transmitted to our muscles, thus limiting the ability of movement and

and the goals he aims to achieve during the match.

Stretching exercises must affect all the more important muscular groups used by the tennis player: muscles of the arms (biceps and triceps muscles), the deltoid and the articulation of the shoulder, pectoral muscles, muscles of the upper and lower back, the glutei, ischiocrural muscles (rear of the leg) the femoral quadriceps (front of the leg) and twin muscles (calves). Every muscle group must be stimulated gradually (progressively increasing muscle elongation until optimum tension is achieved), starting from the upper limbs and ending with the lower or vice versa.



Many professional players say that 20/30 minutes of relaxation before starting the pre-match warm-up are of great benefit for a positive approach to the match.

Mental preparation.

How to achieve good relaxation? Many professional players say that 20/30 minutes of relaxation before starting the pre-match warm-up are of great benefit for a positive approach to the match.

At this time, self-analysis observations and self-criticism are best received if one is physically and mentally calm. This condition can be facilitated by staying in a secluded place with few distracting elements (e.g.: gym, club gardens, etc.), or in the absence of a quiet corner, one can isolate oneself from the outside world by listening to one's favourite music on an iPod. Professional men and women players prefer to await the match in a

dedicated space reserved to them named "players lounge".

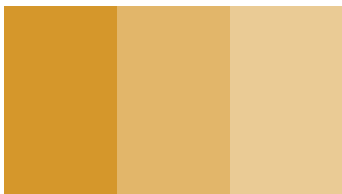
This room is particularly valuable in major tournaments such as the Grand Slam where all players, be they famous or not, are literally assaulted by fans, enthusiasts and autograph hunters if they go outside the reserved areas.

Match visualisation. "I would start thinking about an important match the night before. I would imagine the points that I would play the following day". As we can gather from these words of Serena Williams, visualisation is one of the most important aspects of mental preparation for the match. Visualising is useful for building self confidence, focussing one's attention to the



Tutti sappiamo che il tennis è qualcosa di più che semplice superstizione, ma secondo me non si dovrebbe sottovalutare l'importanza di questi piccoli rituali che i campioni hanno in comune con i giocatori della domenica.

Questi comportamenti all'apparenza inutili hanno la capacità di far sentire bene il giocatore aumentando inconsciamente la sicurezza nei suoi mezzi.



match, bringing the right level of nervous excitement, revisiting match strategies.

Visualisation helps with:

- 1) Reinforcing match strategy
- 2) Gaining confidence and sensitivity in one's shots
- 3) Focussing on the match

Pre-match visualisation is a good opportunity to revisit the match plan, to strengthen the execution of technical moves, select the shots that one wants to use. For example, if you want to attack the opponent on the backhand, imagine yourself hitting from the baseline whilst waiting for the right opportunity to attack and close at the net with a winning volley.

The second purpose is to "feel" one's shots. The tennis player must see himself hitting the ball fluidly and

effectively, attacking the opponent, executing a serve at the right pace, anticipating the return, etc.

The third aim of pre-match visualisation is to focus one's attention uniquely on the match. When the player imagines himself on the tennis court while playing the match, he is automatically focussed on what he needs to do during the match in order to win, and in doing so he removes thoughts of other nature.

Rituals that encourage concentration.

A player's pre-match routine has at least two purposes:

- 1) Organising most effectively the time preceding the beginning of the match in order to promote concentration.



2) Removing doubts and uncertainties.

A routine approach to the match can be crucial in ensuring that a player is best prepared. When a professional player is due to play in a tournament match, his entire day becomes centred on the match as a point of reference. Player and coach together establish times for wake-up call, breakfast, final training (with related bookings of transport from the hotel to the club), lunch, and so on until the player enters the court. In other words, every single time of the day is scheduled in such a way that the player may arrive at the match in the most rational and best possible frame of mind.

A second pattern of behaviour is certainly less 'scientific' but it may be equally important.

A tennis athlete is likely to create habits, patterns of behaviour, repeat actions that have in the past been associated with winning performances. We all know that tennis is something more than simple

superstition, but in my opinion one should not underestimate the importance of these small rituals that champions have in common with Sunday players. These seemingly useless behaviours have the ability to make the player feel well by unconsciously increasing his confidence in his resources.

Bjorn Borg

Bjorn Borg's superstitions is related to one specific tournament, Wimbledon, the one he won five times in a row between 1976 through 1980. Borg would always grow a beard for the tournament and wear the same Fila shirt.

Serena Williams

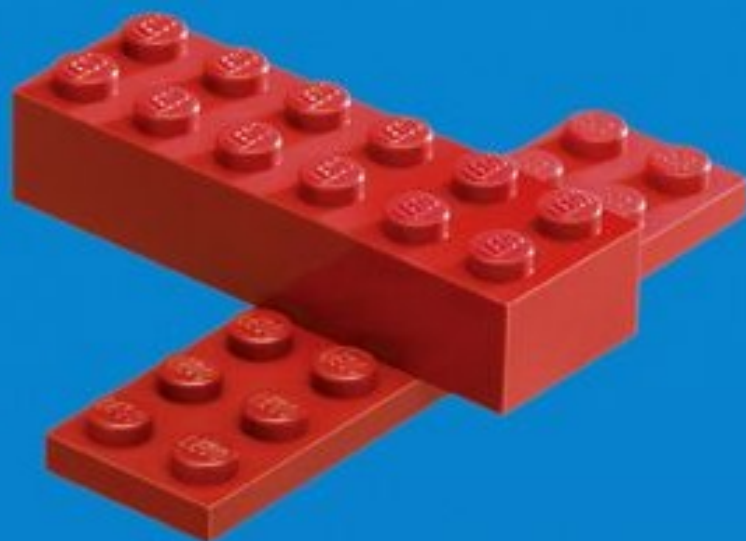
While Serena is generally aggressive on court and has one of the most effective power games on the women's circuit, you would think that would be enough for her but it isn't. Serena's superstitions include bringing her shower sandals to the court, tying her shoelaces a specific way and bouncing the ball five times before her first serve and twice before her second. The three time Wimbledon champ will even wear the same pair of socks during a tournament run. She is also believed to use the same shower during a winning streak.

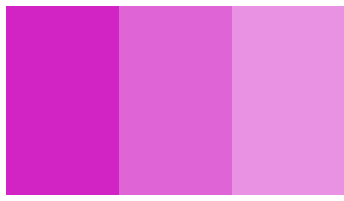
Rafael Nadal

Rafael Nadal borders on obsessive compulsive behaviour, I'm not even sure this qualifies as a superstition. Rafa is fixated with arranging the water bottles with the labels facing the same direction, meticulously arranged on the floor in front of him

Marat Safin

Russia's Marat Safin is said to always travel with an 'evil eye' to ward off evil spirits and bad karma. I hope no one ever gets to see his "evil eye" whatever it is.





The rationale for Mental Training

What it is, what are the components involved, why it is essential to an athlete's performance. Above all, it is a key factor for a step improvement in quality.

Not many may have heard about Mental Training. Let us begin by clarifying what are the psychological dimensions involved, which have in common the fact that they are cross-cutting (later on we will look at what exactly this means): anxiety, aggression, concentration, level of activation, and many others, but these are the most commonly recognizable.

Cross-cutting elements

First let us have a look at why we have defined them cross-cutting: we could imagine any situation in our daily life; for convenience, let us assume we are in our car on our way to work.

Depending on several factors, we have a certain level of activation while we drive (we are sleepy or alert, or nervous, etc). Similarly, we can be more or less concentrated and traffic conditions can make us more or less anxious or more or less aggressive towards other drivers.

There it is, the same type of reasoning can be applied to any other type of situations: which explains why the psychological dimensions involved are called cross-cutting: they cut across all situations and all aspects of our lives. This is also the reason why we instinctively think that it is not worth training these psychological dimensions, and automatically assume the belief that there is nothing to do because it is a given.

What are we made of?

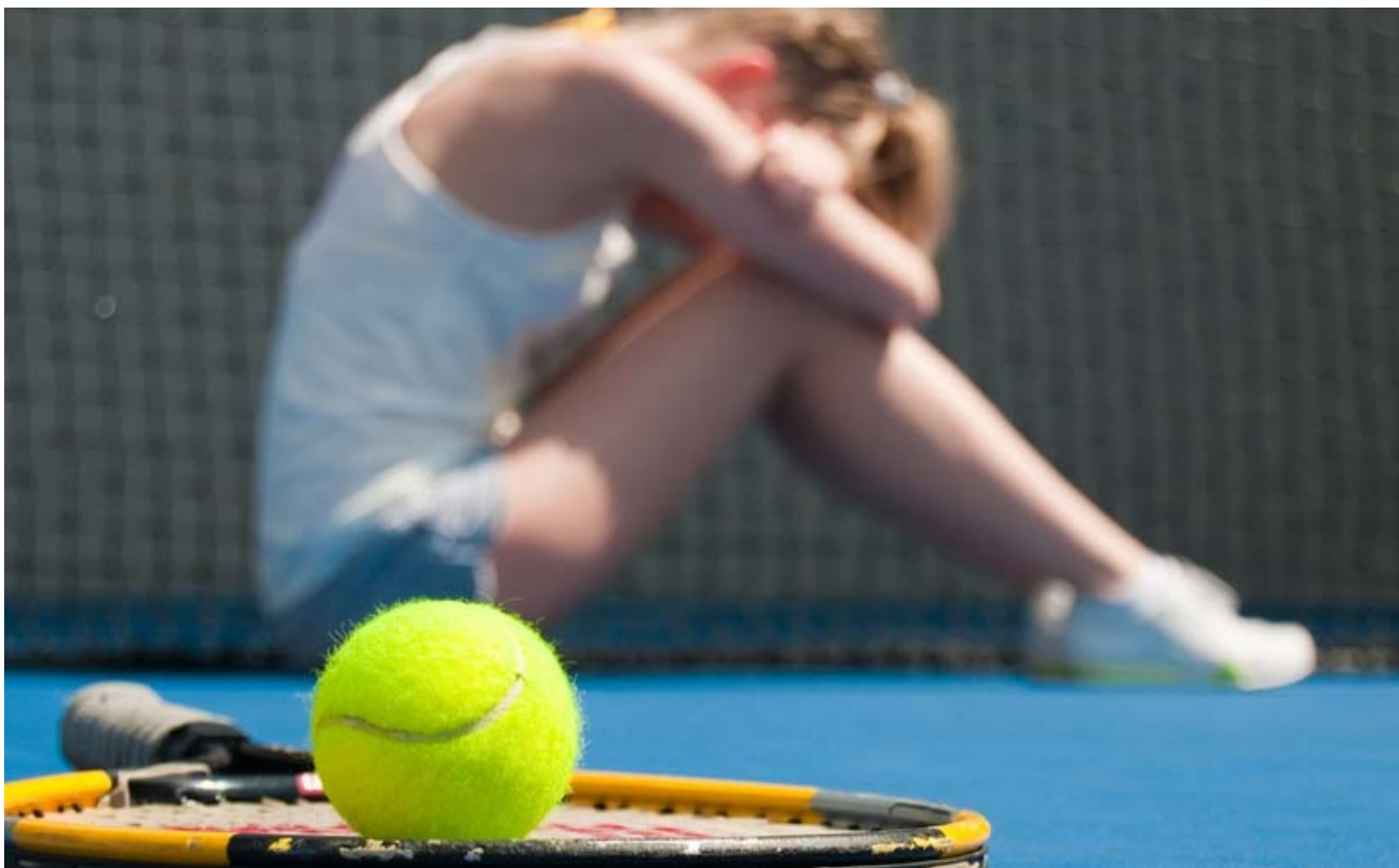
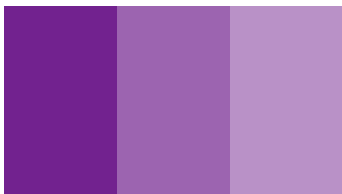
People usually behave more or less the same way, and not much is achieved by urging them to behave differently from the way they are.

This is a good point from which we can start describing Mental Training: Sports Psychology (and Psychology in general) assumes that there are different ways to 'be' and feel with oneself: few determining factors are genetically defined; the rest can be changed.

But 'what' exactly are we?

Many would try to answer by describing either what they believe is their character or their personality: which is correct from a certain point of view.

by Federico Coppini



But what is character, or personality?

In order to keep the explanation really very simple, we can reduce the concept this: us, all of us are mostly a collection of patterns.

In line with the first example, if someone tries to overtake us from the wrong side, we generally have a certain way to respond; if we are in a hurry, we behave in a given way; if we are going shopping, in another, and so on. And - someone will identify with this - there are those who are always driving in a hurry because they are always late, and those who cannot press on the accelerator even if their wife is about to give birth.

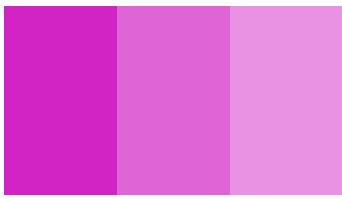
Patterns

Many, small or large patterns help us

face reality and reduce the complexity of the world around us. And each has their own: some people handle a certain situation with some patterns, others will use different ones, and once again we can return to the car situation.

And why so many different patterns as opposed to a 'right' one for every situation? Because obviously each of us develops different patterns for the same situations: in other words we all develop different associations to the various situations in our lives.

We cannot understand exactly how or why. However, we do know with certainty that some people associate certain emotions and certain behaviours with a particular situation, and then repeat them continuously each time that situation occurs until



It is not by chance that we talk about mental training and not psychological interventions, so as not to give the illusion (equally widespread as other false belief) that one can change things as if by taking a medicine it goes away completely. We need to commit, on the court as in the gym

they convince themselves that this is how it is done.

Associations, repetition and habits. Got the trick?

Ever since small children, we spend our entire life associating emotions and behaviours to situations, and we do not know why, nor does it matter. Most probably, the first time we make an association, this makes sense, but at other times maybe it doesn't. That is why some of our present behaviours may not be appropriate for what we are doing.

Let me be clear: if the first time that I feel frustrated I react with anger and this improves my situation, I will repeat this next time and maybe this will work for some time.

Then perhaps I grow up, and reacting to frustration with anger stops being useful, but in the meantime I have developed a habit of reacting this way, and I can't do otherwise.

If I am a tennis player, it could be that I am unable to manage my matches, always reacting with anger to frustrations, but what can I do about it if I am convinced that 'this is the way I am'.

And instead it is just habits: patterns that are repeated time and time again, patterns that are formed through associations.



Association of behaviour + situation
= pattern

Repeated situation + repeated patterns
= habit

Collection of habits
= ingrained beliefs.



We can be different too; but we need training.

We have seen that not everything is genetically predetermined. Without claiming to be able to change people, or people's personality, we can reasonably consider changing a few habits. Not all, only those that 'don't work' in the competition and do not help us feel good nor win.

In order to do this, we must first understand what the habits are and really want to change them, because that can be painful, and in most cases it is.

A habit takes years to become deep rooted: changing it should not necessarily take too much time, but it certainly takes perseverance and commitment.

It is not by chance that we talk about mental training and not psychological interventions.

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The state of flow and the self – overcoming

During the flow, the match becomes a challenging goal that rallies all the resources and the technical, mental, muscular and emotional competence acquired during training and determines the focusing of all energies on optimizing the sport performance.

When a tennis player is well trained and the mental strength is at an optimal level, there won't be emotional or mental issues during the match and the challenge also represents a chance of self – overcoming.

In fact, during the match, players reach the so called state of flow.

In general, this is characterized by a close combination of goals and competences.

Such combination determines the best concentration and focusing possible, without distractions or interruptions that could disturb the performance oriented to the desired goal.

During the flow, the match becomes a challenging goal that rallies all the resources and the technical, mental, muscular and emotional competence acquired during training and determines the focusing of all energies on optimizing the sport performance.

As Weineck says: *“For top players, the stress of the challenge and the state of flow caused by it, let the player use the body and mind's hidden stocks, allowing the reaching or the passing of individual performance limits.”*

So the flow is a state of absolute concentration on the task that takes athletes to the self – overcoming. It's the magic moment, when the athlete's global capacities exactly correspond to the task's difficulty and the athlete tends to develop higher abilities depleting all interior potentialities and energies.

During the flow athletes get to outdo themselves. It's in that sort of trance that they score passing shots that they have never tried before, flying volleys, impossible salvages.

Very important aspect: during the flow, the activity itself is satisfying and fulfilling.

The flow is tightly connected to the enjoyment, to the pleasure of doing what you are doing, so that its discoverer, Csikszentmihalyi, initially defined it as an

by Stefano Massari



It's because they know that, whatever is the final result, so both if they win or lose, they will leave the court as better players than before

autotelic experience, which means something that you do just for the sake of it. In this sense the flow seems strongly connected to the intrinsic motivation.

One of the flow's fundamental characteristics is the total attention to the task and not to one's self. In other words, you are totally absorbed by the game and you don't look at yourself from the outside.

It's a state of hyper-concentration, in which athletes do what they have to do. Csikszentmihalyi distinguishes between micro flow and macro flow. The micro flow is connected to the daily experiences, to the everyday life, the little challenges that we face maybe against time or against a rival at work

or also while cooking a dish that we particularly like to cook, whereas the macro flow shows up in more complicated situations.

Speaking of which, Vincenzo Santopadre's opinion, former Davis Cup and now supervisor at the Aniene's Rowing Club, is interesting.

"When you are in the flow" says Vincenzo "you're so concentrated that you don't even realize you're there, just because you don't see yourself from the outside. On the contrary, you realize very well when you're not in the flow, because everything starts bothering you: the smell of a spectator's cigar, the laugh of someone walking 100 feet away from your court, the chatter of the people



on the bleachers, the noise of gravel under a child's feet while running away."

So the flow is hyper-concentration, but also hyper-awareness and hyper-participation on the court.

If you try to ask a top level tennis player what happened on 3-3-, 15-0 in a match played one day earlier, they will perfectly remember everything, because the flow means full immersion in the match. Just because of its nature, because it's connected to the challenge and to the total engagement in it, it's hard to measure the flow. To make up for it, I notice that it creates a certain, positive dependency in some young tennis players.

What do I mean? I mean that when athletes try the flow during a match, they can't wait to be in that same situation again, so they are dying to play another match.



The Wonders Of Kinesiology

Kinesiology is a discipline that is of great therapeutic effectiveness. Since its introduction by Dr. George J. Goodheart over 50 years ago, it has been used in a wide variety of disciplines and for various applications.

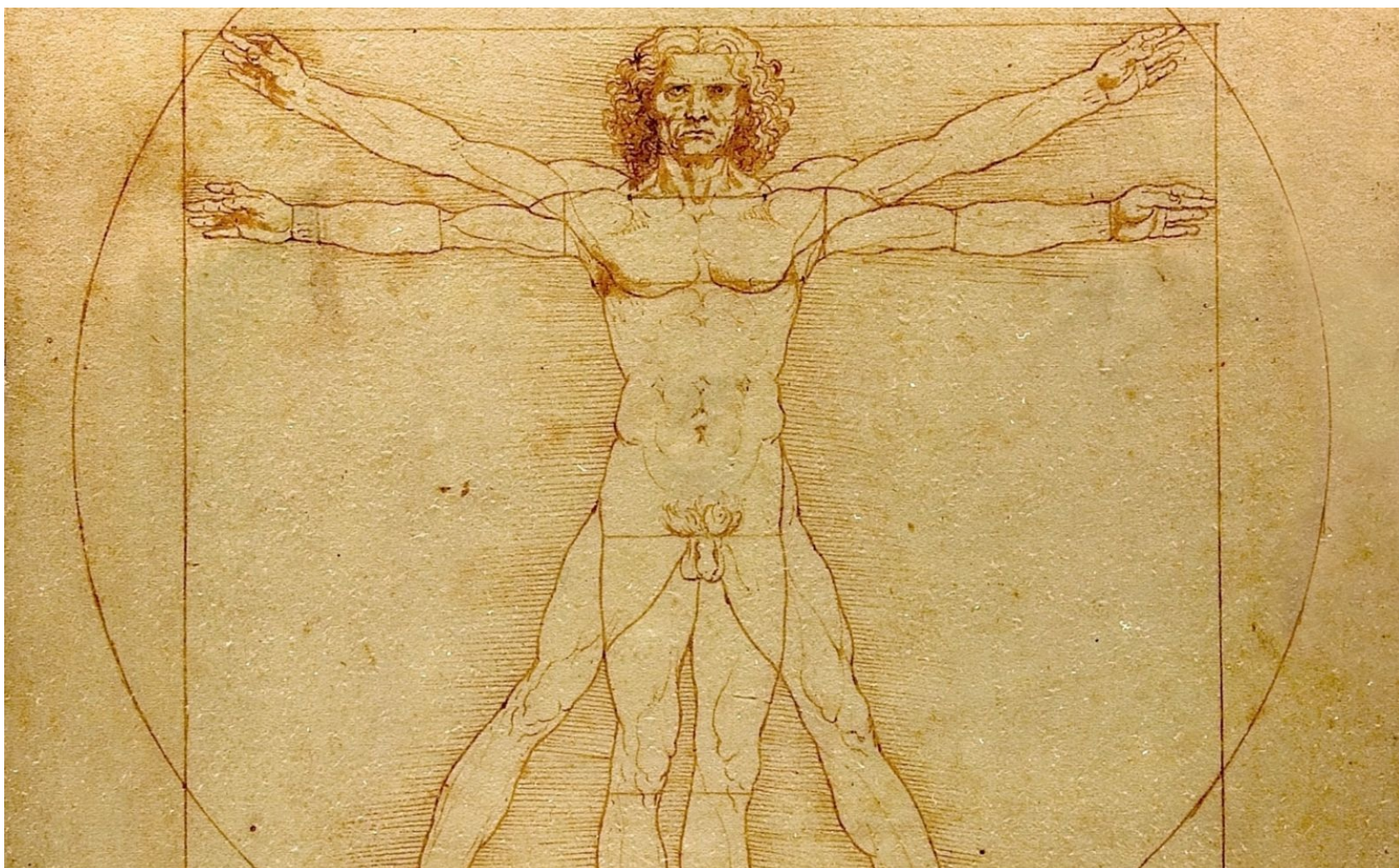
It stands today as one of the most effective ways to improve and preserve the well-being of each person and athlete. Kinesiology is based on the use of tests which allows therapists to evaluate the response of the nervous system against different factors, such as structural, biochemical, emotional and energetic elements. It highlights the existence and possible therapeutic use of specific neurological connections, which are maintained by individual muscles in the body. Any action or change to these can have effects on the entire body. Kinesiology is therefore a holistic approach to health and well-being, the aim of which is to stimulate the body's natural ability to regenerate. During coaching and training sessions, or during therapy in general, the use of Kinesiology as a tool is very useful. Using kinesiology for muscle testing is a manual procedure which is based on feedback gain. It allows you to check an athlete's reactions to a range of factors. This test measures the ability of the athlete to control his muscle response. The proper use of tests allows therapists access to aspects of the athlete that the athlete himself might not be aware of, but which are negatively affecting his performance. Each of the tests are described below, and can be used to improve both the physical and mental wellbeing of the athlete.

1. Water balance

This test will determine whether the bioavailability of water in the athlete is adequate. The human body is composed of about two-thirds water, and the brain of about 90%. Water plays an essential role in many bodily processes, including the elimination of toxins and harmful substances. It is essential in maintaining the electrical polarity in the membrane of cells throughout the body. The body needs hydration, and must never be allowed to need for water.

2. Re-balancing for the plight of switching

Stress can be amplified if we are not hydrated, and in this case the test and rebalancing described above is essential. In Kinesiology, the term "switching"



is used to indicate a state of neurological confusion in which we encounter if we are stressed, such as during a match or tournament. This condition can be tested and rebalanced to get an immediate resolution.

Rub vigorously for about 30 seconds the two points of Acupuncture Rene 27 (below the clavicle and sternum side) and at the same time maintain your free hand in contact with the navel. This treatment is also useful as self-management, and will resolve any confusion or stress.

3. Re-balancing the flow of energy in the Meridian Conception Vessel and Governor Vessel

The Conception Vessel and Governor

Vessel are associated respectively with the Brain and Spinal Cord, which together constitute the fundamental components of the nervous system. The test is intended to verify the absence of stress while promoting the flow of energy to the brain.

4. Manual stimulation of the energy flow in the system of the Twelve Meridians T

his technique is an "energy shower" for the system that stimulates the flow of the meridians, giving energy throughout the body.

5. Muscle rebalancing through stimulation of the periosteum The periosteum is the membrane of connective tissue that surrounds the bone.



Kinesiology is applied in areas of health and fitness for all levels of athletes, but more often found with training of elite athletes. All too often biomechanical analysis focuses on the kinetic energy or the working numbers in execution of technique.

The technique is based on the short and vigorous stimulation of the border area between tendon and bone. Such a "shock" will make the muscle more toned and ready for exercise. The areas to be stimulated from time to time will depend on the muscle in question.

6. Rebalancing spinal massage

Sheldon C. Deal and John F. Thie, two kinesiologists from the US, developed a technique in the late 1970s that stimulates the spinal region, which is particularly beneficial for athletes.

7. Testing and rebalancing of the 14 major muscles

This test provides the athlete with a

way to rebalance his muscles, which will make him feel much more energetic. The test is performed on the following muscles: Supraspinatus, Large Round, Pectoralis clavicular, Spine, Subscapularis, Quadriceps femoris, Tibialis Anterior, Psoas, Gluteus Medius, Small Round, Front Deltoid, Pectoralis chest pad, Middle Deltoid and hamstrings. These 14 muscles were chosen because they are associated with the main meridians of traditional Chinese medicine, as well as the fact that they are strategic to the body's well-being.

8. Improve emotional stress, tissue and posture

The RSE in the athlete facilitates the



Test to verify food

reaction This test is used to determine the specific reaction of an athlete to a type of food. This will fall into the following categories:

- Biogenic → when taken muscles are exhausted
- Biocidic → when taken muscles experience more stress
- Biostatic → when taken it does not change the result of the test



reorganization of bodily resources in a creative manner with respect to a stressor (emotional) or to an area of the body that is uncomfortable (tissue). Another application of the technique is in the presence of postural stress, or bodily memories maintained in reference to a traumatic event. The traumatic memory is stimulated at a subconscious level every time the posture is implemented, ensuring that the person compensates defensively.

9. Re-balancing mechanism for neurological gait

The rebalancing of gait allows you to prevent excessive fatigue during all activities involving ambulation (walking, running, jumping, etc). It also supports the athlete in case of coordination problems.



Tennis Elbow

It is especially common in people who perform actions where there is repetitive twisting of the forearm and/or extension of the elbow and wrist.

Tennis Elbow (Lateral Epicondylitis) is an overuse injury that was originally observed in tennis players, but is very common in all sports, occupations and hobbies.

It is especially common in people who perform actions where there is repetitive twisting of the forearm and/or extension of the elbow and wrist. While casual tennis players often experience Tennis Elbow, professionals are more susceptible to Golfer's Elbow (Medial Epicondylitis).

Why does Tennis Elbow develop?

Tennis elbow is a repetitive strain injury of the big extensor muscle group in the forearm. Tennis Elbow affects the long extensor muscles of the wrist and fingers at the part of the muscle which originates in the humerus. With overuse, tiny micro-tears develop in the tendon part of the muscle. When the micro-tears heal, scarring occurs that leads to decreased blood flow and stiffer tissue. This diseased tissue can sometimes give way, rupture, or even

It can also lead to cystic degeneration. A tighter tendon around the elbow is also one of the common after-effects. Any activity which requires the particular muscle to contract or stretch will result in a very painful elbow.

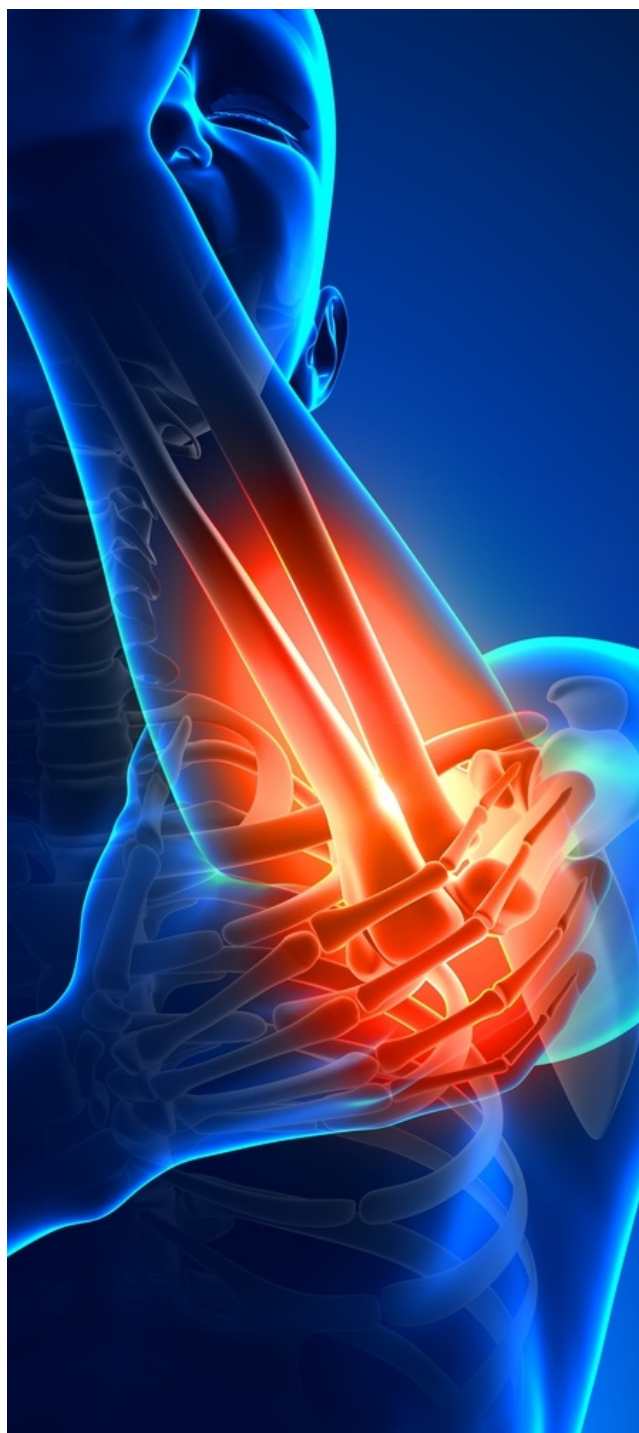
What causes Tennis Elbow?

Overuse usually means doing too much, too early, too soon. But in this case it can also mean bad technique and equipment. The days of slice backhands, heavy wooden racquets (with grip sizes up to 5 1/2) and very fast all-weather tennis courts are gone. These days, overtraining and the use of stiffer frames are the major causes of tennis elbow.

What are the symptoms of Tennis Elbow?

Tennis elbow manifests itself through intense pain in the upper part of the forearm during physical activity such as tennis. Maximum tenderness is usually experienced on the outside prominence (lateral epicondyle) of the elbow.

by Daniel Morkel



The pain is aggravated when the wrist is extended or turned upwards (supination) against resistance.

Prevention is better than cure

Keep the arm flexible: Older players especially need to stretch and tone their upper arm and forearm muscles regularly.

Right technique and training: It is essential that the right basic shot techniques are learned from an early age.

Changes in intensity of training and number of matches played should be made gradually. In younger players, where growth plates are still open, special care must be taken with regard to their training schedule.

Right equipment: More flexible and forgiving racquets with shock absorbers are essential. Grip size, a forgiving frame and relatively loose strings are also important. Be wary of stiff, light frames.

Cure

- 1) Rest and reduce activity until pain subsides (3-4 weeks).
- 2) Correct biomechanics: Stretching and strengthening exercises.
- 3) Correct racquet, grip, strings and technique are all essential.
- 4) Counterforce braces can be used to dissipate force away from the affected tendon.
- 5) Local cortisone injections can facilitate revascularization of the diseased tendon.
- 6) Platelet enriched plasma injections are available in South Africa and the latest studies show better results than cortisone infiltration.

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