

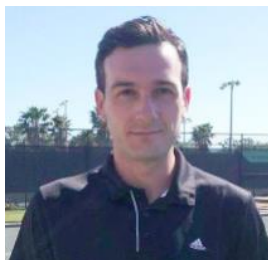


Monthly Newsletter for Louisiana Youth

Youth: our future...and our present!

Eighth Edition August 19, 2016

A regular feature of the Louisiana Youth Newsletter is to "feature" Louisiana young players/families, youth coaches/leaders in our state. Cotter Wilson, Zachary & Gavriella Smith, Caroline Brinson, Dominik Koepfer, Coach David "Red" Ayme. Coach Lloyd Dillon, Sr. Miroslav Vukicevic, Koch family--Rob, Emily, Ben, Emma, Cooper.



The Koch Family



Emily and Robert are the parents of Benjamin, Emma and Cooper Koch of Abbeville, Louisiana. Actually, their home is located in a rural area near the small town of Maurice. Rob played tennis at Northeast Louisiana University in Monroe and Emily played at Louisiana College in Pineville, Louisiana. After college they both ended up teaching at the same club in Lafayette. The tennis court was the reason they met and has been an integral part of their lives ever since. After marriage and children tennis quickly became more than a job-- it became their lifestyle. To play junior tennis it has to become your lifestyle. You are committing yourself financially, mentally, emotionally, and physically. We don't take vacations, we can't splurge on other things outside of tennis or we can't afford to go to the next big tournament. It has been a sacrifice for the entire family. Dreams don't come cheap and in tennis you are old very young. You don't have second chances and you have to give it all from the beginning or someone else will take your dream and live it.

One of Rob's students included his first born son Ben, and his daughter, Emma. (Six year old Cooper has now joined his brother and sister.) Emily remembers, "Ben first started at age 3 1/2 just hitting with dad at the park. He played his first tournament at age 7 1/2. He won the second tournament he entered and it has been non-stop since. Emma was already going to all the tournaments with Ben so she started playing. Emma's path has been different from Ben's. She has had to work harder and has had to live in Ben's shadow. It's not easy but she has always been proud of Ben's success. When Ben is in town the two of them train together on court and at the gym. Her favorite part of tennis is actually the gym. She loves working out. One day that will all pay off. Now all three are playing like they had a choice. HaHa!. Cooper has the fire like Ben. He wants to hit all day and go hit with everyone of Rob's lessons in the backyard. They have big dreams. They have sacrificed much and have worked very hard to be where they are.



Emma's first 8's & Ben winning 10's



Cooper's First Tournament



Welsh Hotart & Ben



Emma & Jessica



Emma & Micah Pierce



Matthew Rowe & Ben



Zachariah Jordan & Ben

Southern's 14s Intersectional Team



Start of a Dream By Benjamin Koch August 25, 2015

I was standing in the hot sun on a North Carolina tennis court waiting to grab my destiny. The silence engulfed me as I stood at the net while my partner, Welsh Hotard, my skinny red-headed doubles partner, prepared to serve for the match. Not just any match, but the finals of the Southern Junior Championships. This is the biggest tournament in all of the South, which included 9 states. That moment was the culmination of all my hard work and all my sacrifices. I then told my partner, "Wait!" I walked up to him and said, "Serve down the center and I will poach." The ball was served in and I poached at the net and hit the winning volley! I then said, "Chest bump, Welsh!" Welsh and I became Southern champions. The silence was gone and filled with screams of all our fans and family members. "Way to go Ben and Welsh," my grandmother retorted. That moment I knew what true success was like on the tennis court.

While most dreams take a lifetime to achieve, they generally start with one event that sparks the desire to make it a reality. My dream happened to be becoming a great tennis player and it all started one hot, humid summer night. Then, it progressed and my parents built a tennis court and I started playing tournaments all over the country. Now at the age of thirteen, I stand at the brink of my dreams, sacrificing much and working hard.

Let's go back a few years and talk about how it all started. At the age of three my dad, who was a giant to me then and still is, decided to take me down to the local courts where I lived. By the way, he is 6'6" tall. I guess he did not think it was a bad idea since both of my parents were great tennis coaches and college players. Then he said, "Are you ready?" I then smiled and said, "Yes Daddy." He then smiled back with that kind of grin that told me he was glad to be my dad. So we went out to the courts and I was very excited to finally get to play. Then, we arrived at the nasty, ugly, and terrible smelling courts. I did not notice that much then because I was so pumped to be able to play. I do not remember how I played, but I do remember that I did not want to leave and that I had to be forced off the court. From then on, I got better and better and my parents saw my great potential so they entered me in my first tournament. I was seven years old and it was at an old run down club in Shreveport, LA. I was very excited to be entered and I thought of myself as a pro. I played four matches and all of them were very tight, but I lost every one. I cried after every hard fought match that I lost, but I tried my best and my parents were proud. My mom, who is quite the opposite of my dad, was a short tiny woman, came up to me and said, "Son, this doesn't define the

player you will become. This is just a stepping stone to who you will become." Those words didn't mean much to me then, but they do now. After my last match, I looked up to my mom and dad and I said, "I want to win the US Open." The dream was ablaze in me now!

Time went on and I played another tournament in Lafayette, LA. and I won it. I was so happy and I asked my dad, "When is my next tournament?" He chuckled and said, "I do not know when do you want it to be?" I said, "Today." Then my dad laughed. Seven years old and just my second tennis tournament and I won it. I was very happy and then practiced even harder with my dad at the local courts. The local courts were in a not so good part of town, but all I could see was a little yellow ball at this point. I played many more tournaments. I won a lot and met many friends along the way. Many of them to this day are still my friends.

Then, at the age of ten we decided to take tennis more seriously and we built a big blue tennis court in our huge back yard. I could hit and train more often and then I got a lot better. We then decided to take another big leap and I became homeschooled. It put a lot of stress on my family and sometimes we wanted to give up. We pushed forward and decided it was best for my tennis game which was growing rapidly.

Next, I started playing big tournaments all around the country. It was a very big and difficult jump because we would travel all the way to Timbuctoo and lose at first. The players were stronger and as serious as I was. It was a whole new level of competition. It was very frustrating and sometimes made me want to give up. I remember sitting on our court and turning to my dad and saying, "Dad, do you really think this is all worth it?" His response was so solid with no room for error. He said, "Ben, I have never seen a junior with more talent than you or with your work ethic." My dad has coached tennis for over 20 years. Time passed and I then got the feel of how to perform on the bigger stages and started winning and making it farther in the tournaments. The strange thing was that the more I won, the more pressure I had on my shoulders. The expectations were for me to win all the time now. At such a young age that kind of pressure can break you

This leads me to the down side with tennis. No one can win all the time, but everyone had sacrificed so much so there was a need to win a lot. It puts a lot of stress on the family and everyone gets mad a lot of the time. First, the father son relationship is jeopardized. That is because he cannot be just my dad. He has to be my coach. Therefore, sometimes he has to be rough on me to get me to where my tennis game needs to be. Next, my mom feels like she has a lot of pressure on her shoulders because she has to homeschool my sister and me. She feels the responsibility for my education. Then, on top of all of that, my dad has to coach my sister as well. Finally, tennis is a very expensive sport and we have to constantly worry about the finances to support my dreams. I feel that pressure that everyone is paying to support my dream. Most of my tournaments are out of state so there are hotel bills, food bills and just normal traveling expenses. So, you can see how this is hard on a family. . There is a quote from a professional tennis player that rings so true to me. It is by Billie Jean King, a woman that shaped the game of tennis for today's generation. She stated, "Pressure is a privilege!" I was given a talent that I was lucky to have and whatever came with that, the pressure and so on, I should count myself blessed.

As you can see tennis has changed my life in many good and bad ways. It has taken a lot of dedication, sacrifice, and stress on my family. All that being said, it has changed my life and opened many doors for me. I have a racket sponsor and a clothing sponsor. I would never change this dream or the way it all started on some run down city courts in a little town way down south. Who knows where my road will lead me, but the fire is alive in me.



Gus Rivera Junior
Achievement Award
2014



Ben & John Isner



Ben received a full
scholarship from John
Newcombe

Message from Leif A. Olsson

I will start my Fall junior clinics on Monday, August 22 @ Bissonet CC 5400 Irving St. Metairie, La 70003.
Schedule: Beginners - Mondays 5:00 - 6:00 pm,
Intermediate - Tuesdays/Thursdays 4:30 - 5:30 pm,
Advanced players - Mondays 6:00 - 7:00 pm and
Thursdays 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm. You can pay per time or pay monthly.
Members & Non-members are welcome to participate. Feel free to call me at 504-401-3861 to sign up, or if you have any questions.



A's & Aces Kids Learn & Compete at 2016 NJTL 10s Excellence Teams Cup



The A's & Aces 10 & Under Excellence Team was one of eleven teams chosen nationwide to compete in the 2016 NJTL Excellence Teams Cup, hosted by the USTA Foundation in College Park, Maryland. In addition to the competition, our players attended the Citi Open, with draws of top ATP and WTA players, participated in a clinic with famed coach Nick Bollittieri (pictured above), interacted with other young tennis players from around the country, and toured famous monuments of Washington, D.C. Our Excellence Team placed 3rd overall!

Source: A's and Aces Newsletter



\$50 INCLUDES:
***10 & UNDER MEMBERSHIP**
***BEGINNER HEAD RACKET**
***4 HOURS OF LESSONS**
***PIZZA PARTY**

Querbes 10 & Under Session 1 Tennis Apprentice

Saturday's from 10:00-11:00 AM
Dates: August 27th- Sept. 17th
To Sign-Up: [Click Here](#)

NOLA City Park 10 & Under Session 1 Tennis Apprentice

Saturday from 11:00am- 12:00pm
Dates: August 27, Sept 10, Sept. 17th and Sept. 24th
To Sign-Up: [Click Here](#)

To Register:
[Click Here](#)

Source: LTA Website



BATON ROUGE JUNIOR PROGRAMS

3 DATES:

- August 21st at Southern Oaks
- September 18th at the Legacy at Bonne Esperance
- October 9th at Highland Park Tennis Center
- Championship: November 6th at YMCA and Highland Park Tennis Center

AGES: 9-18

Offered to players of all levels (Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced)

For more information or how to sign-up: [Click Here](#)



NORTHWEST LOUISIANA JUNIOR PROGRAMS

10 & Under Neighborhood Leagues

Place: North Bossier Tennis Center

Date: August 16 & 18, 23 & 25
September 17th

Time: 6-7pm

Age: 6-10 years old

Junior Tennis Apprentice

Place: Querbes Tennis

Dates: August 27th-

Times: 10-11am

Ages: 6-10 years old

Place: Natchitoches Tennis Center

Session1

Date: July 11th- 15

Time: 9-10am

Age: 6-10 years old

Place: Natchitoches Tennis Center

Session1

Date: August 1st- 5th

Time: 9-10am

Age: 6-10 years old

Source: LTA Website

UPCOMING NOLA AREA JUNIOR EVENTS



Atkinson-Stern FREE 10 & Under Playday

Location: Atkinson-Stern Tennis Center

Phone:(225) 2473028

1:00 PM - 2:30 PM

09/17/2016 - 09/17/2016

Unlimited Spots Available

Age Group: Junior; 10 and under



2016 City Park Pepsi Jr. Championship

Location: New Orleans City Park Tennis Center

Phone:504-483-9383

All Day

08/19/2016 - 08/21/2016

Age Group: 16 and under; 12 and under; Junior; 18 and under; 10 and under; 14 and under

Icy Hot USTA Southern Level 2 Championships (BG 12-18) presented by Allstate
Sugar Bowl

Location: New Orleans City Park Tennis Center

Phone:504-483-9383

11/12/2016 - 11/14/2016

Age Group: Junior; 18 and under; 14 and under; 16 and under; 12 and under

New Orleans Grand Prix presented by Second Serve Tennis Center (RANKED STA/LTA - L5)

Location: University Tennis Center

Phone:504-284-3914

All Day

08/13/2016 - 08/14/2016

Age Group: 18 and under; Junior; 14 and under; 10 and under; 16 and under; 12 and under

New Orleans Open presented by Second Serve Tennis Center (RANKED STA/LTA - L5)

Location: University Tennis Center

Phone:504-284-3914

All Day

09/17/2016 - 09/18/2016

Age Group: 10 and under; 14 and under; Junior; 16 and under; 18 and under; 12 and under

NOLA Summer Jr. Open (RANKED L5)

Location: A's & Aces

Phone:504-909-5373

08/05/2016 - 08/07/2016

Age Group: 8 and under; 12 and under; 16 and under; 18 and under; 10 and under; 14 and under;

NOLA Fall Jr. Grand Prix (STA/LTA-L5)

Location: A's & Aces

Phone:504-909-5373

All Day

11/19/2016 - 11/20/2016

Age Group: 10 and under; 12 and under; 14 and under; 16 and under; 18 and under; 8 and under; J

Stone Creek Junior Fall Closed Classic Presented By Ross Downing Buick,GMC Chevrolet (STA/LTA - L4)

Location: Stone Creek Club and Spa

Phone:985-801-7100

All Day

10/14/2016 - 10/16/2016

Age Group: 16 and under; 18 and under; Junior; 10 and under; 14 and under; 12 and under

Stone Creek Junior Freeze Presented by Northpark Hyundai (STA/LTA-L5)

Location: Stone Creek Club and Spa

Phone:985-801-7100

All Day

12/09/2016 - 12/11/2016

Age Group: Junior; Adult; 18 and under; 12 and under; 14 and under; 16 and under; 10 and under

Feature Friday

Juniors: Do you have a great match or tournament that you can't stop thinking about, and a part of you wants to brag, just a little? We want to help! Send us your story! Send story to: fanjoy@sta.usta.com



Dave says, "Please recycle your tennis balls and cans."

